



Window on Jordan

Post elections doldrums: Fighting the withdrawal symptoms

By a Star Staff Writer

The elections are over and the banners have been removed. The only thing that remains of the campaign are the colored flyers depicting images of candidates. Some we remember, others we have forgotten already. They are still pasted on electricity poles, bus stations, road signs and walls. They will stay with us for sometime, until the elements of nature; rain, wind, sun and dust take their toll and slowly remove them from the face of the earth.

These are the withdrawal symptoms of the elections mania. Ad-hoc candidates' headquarters have been abandoned and now function as peace-

ful dwellings again. The tents and canopies erected in empty lots have been dismantled. Rented cars and buses have been returned to their rightful owners—some retaining the scars of battle; broken windows, torn seats and dented fenders.

The candidates themselves, those who did not make it, are busy counting their losses and paying the bills. They are hounded by creditors that are a motley lot; restaurant owners, printers, taxi and bus drivers and grocery keepers.

But Jordanians have got their streets back. The banners are gone and life slowly stumbles back into normal and prosaic beats. The national pastime of electroneering has been concluded. What

remains are the intellectual analyses of the results carried daily by newspapers. And yes, there are the salon discussions, long and never dull, of what happened and how this candidate won and why this candidate lost. These talks become rituals where people vent out their frustrations and become arm-chair political observers underlining every event, incident and outcome. They give the post-elections doldrums their inner-most meanings and in a way reflect the sense of déjà vu that hovers over all of us as we reminisce and look back to what could have been a more poignant battle for democratic advancement!

Continued on page 2



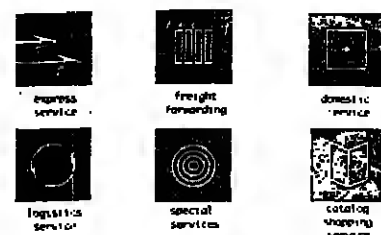
Congratulates
His Majesty King Hussein
on his birthday and wishes
him many happy returns
of the day.

The Star

Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

METS'97
Middle East Technology Show
Page 9-11

Pourquoi les femmes
ont perdu les élections ?
Le Jourdain Page 14



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أسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Elected deputies will have to prove that they are more than service MPs, observers say

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer

WHAT WILL the next Lower House be like? This is the question that is keeping Jordanians wondering. Will it be able to face the tough challenges ahead? Many are sceptical, pointing out that with a tribally-dominated Parliament, and the opposition out of the way, the 13th Parliament will prove to be no more than a rubber stamp for government policy.

The outcome of the elections was "a Parliament that is not politicized, a Parliament where the majority of its members have no program and can be labeled as service MPs only," said Dr Lahib Kambawi, a political analyst, and one of the 80 independent figures who together with the Islamist-led nine opposition parties decided to boycott the recent elections.

Parliament "will not be capable of addressing and handling the complex political and economic issues that require a political program to counteract government policy."

Analysts say the coming 80-member Lower House will have to tackle major issues such as the future of the four-year-old Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. Other issues include dealing with unemployment, poverty, and the austerity measures of the World Bank.

However, deputies seem to have other priorities. Analysts say that because of the stress on "service" issues in their elections campaign, it is likely that deputies will concentrate on more parochial and mundane issues.

But like it or not, they will have to discuss a new election law that would replace the widely criticized one-man-one-vote system and the government imposed temporary Press and Publication Law. Analysts believe these would be the first tests of the House and would mark it either as an independent institution, or as one with a "pro-government" label.

As this Lower House is poised to take the country into the next millennium, it will be faced with the tough task of adopting modern legislation related to the civil status, children and women. Also it has to deal with the deteriorating economic situation in the country.

"[The elections] are a step backward, in terms of representation, not necessarily in terms of future performance of Parliament. I do not want to make a pre-judgment, because major issues have been passed through Parliament, like the peace treaty," Dr Moussa Shtaiwi, a Sociology professor at the University of Jordan told *The Star*.

But he was realistic at the same time. "The country at this stage needs modern legislations for the social, political and economic issues that require good skills, good background and good training. Many in the new Parliament don't seem to have that." But the professor was candid: "I am not accusing anybody of lack of knowledge—some MPs are seasoned and have the political skill, but many are not."

Observers say the boycott had a dramatic effect on the voting process. It affected voter turnout and therefore shape of the Lower House, and also will affect the structure of the 40-senate Upper House, appointed by His Majesty King Hussein.

More than 90 percent of the 80 MPs represent purely tribal and regional interests. While the real opposition in the House does not exceed 12. As a result, analysts believe that the next House will be feeble, with little debate of national issues.

"The outcome of these elections is not reflective of Jordanian

Continued on page 2



US pilots load missiles to an F-14 fighter on a US carrier in the Gulf this week

Baghdad insists on setting deadline to end sanctions UN moves to condemn Iraq, but US fails to underline military option

By John M. Goshko

UNITED NATIONS—The Security Council was ready to vote Wednesday on a US-sponsored resolution that would condemn Iraq for banning American arms inspectors and impose travel restrictions on Iraqi officials.

But the United States retreated from urging the council to promise "serious consequences" if Iraq continues its defiance. Although top Clinton administration officials Tuesday reiterated that they have not ruled out military action against Iraq, the US strategy, at least for now, is to emphasize diplomatic and economic pressures as a means of placating those members of the 15-nation council, notably France and Russia, that oppose military force.

Washington's aim is first to unite the council behind a clear statement that it will not countenance Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's attempts to disrupt the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) charged with finding and eliminating Iraq's hidden weapons programs. Then, if progressively tougher sanctions fails, the United States could argue that force was the only option to counter Saddam's alleged threat to the peace and security of the Gulf region.

For these reasons, diplomatic sources said, the United States and its chief ally on the council, Britain, agreed that the

resolution should drop a warning of "serious consequences" if Baghdad carries out its threat to expel UNSCOM's American personnel.

Instead, the revised draft being circulated Tuesday night takes the indirect approach of having the preamble refer to an Oct. 29 council statement that used the term "serious consequences" in reference to Iraq's actions. Diplomats expected the resolution to be voted on Wednesday.

Although US ambassador Bill Richardson acknowledged that "a few wrinkles" still needed to be ironed out, the resolution is expected to strongly condemn Iraq's actions and ban international travel by those Iraqi officials involved in blocking UNSCOM operations. It might also suspend the council's periodic review of whether to continue existing sanctions, although the sources said that provision could encounter some opposition.

"This is more than a travel ban," Richardson said. "I think the council is ready to move on a resolution with teeth in it.... It sends an unmistakable signal for Iraq to comply immediately, and I believe it will have near unanimous support in the council."

However, hanging over the maneuvering here was the knowledge that some council members—including

France, Russia and China, each with the power to veto any decision—are still on record as opposing the kind of air and missile strikes that the United States has employed in past confrontations with Iraq.

"We want to express our decisive opposition to using the United Nations Security Council as a cover for military strikes against Baghdad," Russian President Boris Yeltsin's spokesman, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, said in Harbin, China, where Yeltsin is on a visit. The spokesman added that the Russian and Chinese positions on military force were the same. But Russia also reiterated its insistence that Iraq end its opposition to UNSCOM.

Here in New York, Russia's UN ambassador, Sergey Lavrov, said: "We are of the position that Iraq ... must come to full and unconditional cooperation with the Special Commission. But we don't believe that any threat or use of force is going to help things."

A similar position was taken by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, whose country is on the Security Council and whose views are believed to be reflective of the attitude in Arab countries. He told a Cairo newspaper that he had appealed to Saddam to end the dis-

Continued on page 2

Egypt's boycott decision of Doha summit is a blow to US diplomacy

By John Lancaster and John Daniszewski

CAIRO, AMMAN—President Hosni Mubarak announced Tuesday that Egypt will boycott a US-sponsored conference aimed at forging economic ties between Arab states and Israel, saying such contacts are meaningless in light of the deadlock in Middle East peace negotiations.

The decision by Egypt, one of Washington's closest Arab allies, was a serious diplomatic setback for the United States. It dramatized the depth of anger among many Arabs over what they see as insincerity by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel's negotiations with the Palestinians. The announcement also reflected a generally sour mood in US-Arab relations at a time when Washington is trying to build regional support for a strong stand against Iraq.

Although US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will be at the conference opening and senior U.S. officials have crisscrossed the Arab world to drum up support, so far only three Arab countries besides Qatar—Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen—are on record as planning to participate. For the United States, Egypt's defection is the unkindest cut of all. Other US friends in the region—including Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates—already had decided to boycott.

Like some other Arab leaders, Mubarak has declared opposition to US military strikes as a means of resolving the standoff between Baghdad and the United Nations on weapons inspections.

As the first Arab country to make peace with Israel and the second-largest recipient, after Israel, of US foreign aid, Egypt has long enjoyed warm relations with the United States. Although Cairo has resisted US pressure to fully normalize

relations with Israel, it has supported the peace process and has participated in each of the three economic summits, which have focused on regional development issues such as trade, tourism and water resources.

Last year's was held in Cairo. But the deterioration of relations between Israel and the Palestinians over the last year has also badly strained Israel's ties with Cairo. In recent weeks, Egyptian officials said they would not attend the economic meeting in Doha unless Israel demonstrated commitment to peace with concrete measures, such as suspending settlement-building in the West Bank.

When talks between Israel and the Palestinians in Washington last week failed to produce a breakthrough, Mubarak felt he had no choice but to order a boycott of the meeting, Egyptian officials said. "We have extended our patience in the hope that something might happen," a senior Egyptian official said Tuesday evening, speaking anonymously. "But for businessmen to get together and for an economic conference to succeed, you need a climate. This is not a photo op. This is not a psychological message. This is why Egypt will not be attending. The climate has been poisoned by Mr. Netanyahu and his government."

Mubarak, announcing the boycott of the conference, which is scheduled to begin Sunday in Doha told members of the ruling Democratic Party in Cairo, "Egypt will not take part in the Doha conference and will not send a delegation to attend it."

"The aim of an economic conference is to build cooperation between Israel and the Arab community and this is linked to progress toward peace," he said. Mubarak said

Continued on page 2

INSIDE



Polish supplement
pages 6 & 7

Music of Chopin
page 8

Weekend: New
movie on Journalism
page 11

After the au pair's case: US experts weigh impact of TV on trials

By Joan Biskup

IT WAS trial as sport, with play-by-play commentators, televised outbursts from waiting crowds and, in the English an pair's home town, images of champagne corks flying as the judge threw out the jury's murder verdict, changed it to manslaughter and set Louise Woodward free.

Like the O.J. Simpson case two years earlier, the trial in the death of a Massachusetts infant drew millions of people to their television sets and evoked an outpouring of public opinion on whether justice of public opinion on whether justice was served. But as the public has become intoxicated with big trials, legal experts are focusing on a central question: Can public passion taint a

justice system that is intended to be impartial?

Trials are supposed to reflect the sentiments of the community—a state brings charges on behalf of "the people" and a jury is made up of one's peers—but what happens when public involvement turns into public influence?

Does the public sentiment captured by pollsters, talk radio hosts and TV commentators ever sway a judge? If that happens, are the interests of justice served? In reducing Woodward's sentence Monday, Judge Hiltebeitel B. Zobel himself raised the issue by acknowledging that the public eye was upon him. "Judges must follow their oaths

and do their duty, heedless of editorials, letters, telegrams, picketers, threats, petitions, panelists, and talk shows," he said. "In this country, we do not administer justice by plebiscite."

Few are suggesting that Zobel bowed to popular opinion, but the intense media coverage and public attention cannot help but raise the specter that in high-profile cases like Woodward's, judges feel the same pressure that any human being would. "This isn't an election or a popularity contest," said Nancy Luque, a former federal prosecutor and now defense lawyer in the District of Columbia. "While I think that the judge is right, that 'justice' has to prevail, I'm not always sure it can when the lobbying is so intense and

Continued on page 2



Happy Birthday
and long life
Your Majesty

ARAB BANK

هَذَا مِنْ أَهْلِ



"Welcome to America, President Zaimir"
(Heavy Metal: China's President Zaimir could not find a warm bed for the U.S. visit, with the news of the collapse of the Hong Kong stock market, reflecting on China's takeover of the former British colony just a short time ago.)

Our Say...

America's holocaust in Iraq

THE CURRENT crisis between the UN and Iraq over Baghdad's threat to expel Americans working with the weapons inspection teams cannot be separated from the broader sanctions regime in force since 1991.

More than six years of grueling economic punishments of Iraq have had their toll on the Iraqi people. These sanctions are responsible for the plight of millions of Iraqis who are in bad need of food and medicine. At the center of the standoff between Iraq and the UN is America's insistence to "contain" the regime of President Saddam Hussein and ultimately bring it down. That is not on the UN agenda.

When the oil embargo was first imposed it had two main aims. One was the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi forces from occupied Kuwait and the second was the dismantling of Iraq's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. The first objective was achieved during the Gulf War, when Iraq was forced out of Kuwait. The second target has been under implementation for over six years. The mission of the UN weapons inspectors had almost reached its end.

But under US pressure, the Security Council has been unwilling to ease the sanctions and set a deadline for their eventual removal. In fact, Baghdad's appeals to initiate a constructive dialogue with the United Nations' Security Council in order to review its resolutions and set a schedule to phase out the sanctions and reintroduce Iraq into the international community have been rebuffed by Washington.

Today the UN sanctions, kept in place at America's insistence, are responsible for the death of over 1.2 million Iraqis, mostly children. This American holocaust cannot be allowed to continue. The sanctions have succeeded in stripping Iraq of most of its warfare capabilities, but have done little to weaken President Saddam's grip hold over Iraq. The first outcome falls within the demands of UN resolutions while the second remains an internal Iraqi affair that does not concern the United States or the United Nations.

The plight of the Iraqi people cannot go on any longer. As Arabs we feel ashamed that it had reached so far. The conspiracy of silence has come to an end. The sanctions must be removed now.

The United States has committed a terrible mistake by believing that the sanctions will help overthrow the Iraqi regime. Now it has Arab blood on its hands and its policies in the Arab world are self-condemning. Arab boycott of the Doha summit is a message to the United States more than it is a message to Israel. America's objectives of lending a blind support to Israel, while seeking to contain Iraq and Iran in order to maintain its control and presence in the Gulf are today reaching their limits.

America cannot hope to use the Security Council any longer as a cover for its own self-serving policies and objectives. The recent standoff has exposed Washington's motives and put its alliance against Iraq on thin ice.



Palestinian shoulboys, in Bethlehem's Dahaihe refugee camp, carry Palestinian and Iraqi flags shout pro-Iraqi slogans during a demonstration last week

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Notes from the Levant

November blues: Sanctions, economic summits and double standards

By Osama El-Sherif

NOVEMBER STARTED on the wrong foot for our region—and the month isn't over yet. The US slapped an economic embargo against Sudan, the UN Security Council renewed its tough sanctions on Libya and now we have the Iraq-UN stand-off, one which threatens Baghdad with additional sanctions and a military strike for not cooperating with UN weapons inspectors.

To rub it all in, Israel took the Palestinians on another wild goose chase, this time in Washington DC, while the US sought to reward Israeli intransigence by calling on the Arabs to sit and do business with Israel at the upcoming Doha economic summit.

The United States' favorite weapon, economic sanctions, is currently being used on two Arab countries while the third, Sudan, is at this stage coming under the hammer of US sanctions. A fourth country, Jordan, has learned to live with a variant—a by-product if you prefer—of the six-year-old siege of Iraq. Inspectors from Lloyds continue to examine cargo unloaded in the Jordanian port of Aqaba to make sure that no banned material ever finds its way into neighboring Iraq. The Lloyd inspectors replaced US Navy ships over three years ago that used to intercept every vessel entering the Gulf of Aqaba to call on the Jordanian port.

Libya sees no end in sight to UN sanctions imposed on it for failing to hand-over two Libyans for their alleged involvement in the Pan Am explosion over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in 1988. Attempts to put the two men, which Tripoli claims their innocence, on trial in a neutral country—other than the UK and the United States—have failed. A stalemate over the Lockerbie case means prolonging the sanctions against Libya—and that suits Washington's policymakers just fine.

Sudan is another case. The United States has been at odds with the military regime in Khartoum for years, accusing it of harboring terrorists and violating human rights. But the US does not hide its disapproval of the Islamist leanings of President Omar Al Bashir and his rule. The Sudanese, on the other hand, claim that Washington, along with Israel, Ethiopia, Kenya and Eritrea, are conspiring to divide the Sudan into a Muslim north and a Christian south. Egypt, which is also at odds with the Bashir regime, finds itself in an awkward position where its political differences with Khartoum are overshadowed by its genuine fear over threats to the Nile sources in Sudan and Ethiopia.

So Sudan too will have to live under the hammer of US sanctions and harassment. The Arab League's objections to the sanctions treatment do not appear to make a bearing on Washington. But the Iraqi case is the most controversial and dangerous. Six and a half years of tough UN sanctions have so far claimed the lives of over 1.2 million Iraqis, mostly children. And these are inde-



An Iraqi woman putting an oxygen mask on the face her sick daughter in Saddam's Children Hospital. Biting sanctions imposed since 1990 have hit children and the elderly the most

pendent figures, supplied by UN organizations working in the field.

For the Iraqis, the recent crisis over Baghdad's decision not to allow American nationals to be part of the weapon's inspectors team, only underlines growing frustration over US insistence to prolong the life of the UN embargo at any cost.

Iraq says it has met most of the requirements of various UN resolutions pertaining to the Gulf crisis and wants to know when it will receive a clean bill of health from the UN body and accordingly, when the sanctions will be lifted.

The US says the Iraqis have a long way to go. That means more years of under UN sanctions. If it could, the US would also impose sanctions on Iran and Syria.

America's sanctions policy, whether unilaterally or through the UN, is a ruthless and indiscriminate one since it hurts people more than regimes. Iraq is a case in point. Nothing can justify the needless dying of over one million Iraqis as a result of endemic shortages in food and medicine. The same applies to Libya and Sudan, which America treats as rogue regimes and where the easiest solution is to lock up an entire nation and throw away the keys. And to add insult to injury this is done in the name of the international community, whose will, it seems, is now in Washington's hands.

Against the background of economic sanctions and a collapsing peace process, Washington wants the Arab world to line up and show up at the Doha economic summit. It wants to reward Israel, which occupies Arab land and defies Security Council resolutions, while dispensing its own brand of justice in Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Palestine.

Much has been written and said about America's double standards in the Middle East. This November we are reminded again of the cruelty of the sanctions weapon employed so lightly by the United States. In the final analysis, the judge is also the executioner, but we have known this all the time!

Arab support for US stance against Iraq hard to find

By John Daniszewski

CAIRO, Egypt—If President Clinton decides on a military strike to punish Iraqi President Saddam Hussein for blocking UN weapons inspections, he might want at least verbal support from US allies in the Arab world.

If so, it may be hard to find. Although friendly Arab states such as Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia may sympathize with the US position in the dispute, believing that Hussein has been deliberately provocative, there has been only muted public backing for the United States and chief UN weapons inspector Richard Butler.

The silence of the region's leaders speaks volumes about the present disenchantment with US policy in the Middle East among ordinary Arabs.

"At this moment, with the deterioration in the peace process in the Middle East, I think any military action against Iraq will inflame the area against the United States," predicted Egyptian political scientist Abdel-Moneim Said.

"Everybody will scream... that the United States is using the UN and Security Council for only one purpose: to strike at Arab people."

It is a far cry from seven years ago, when then-President Bush was able to persuade most of the Arab world to join the US-led coalition to oust Hussein's forces from Kuwait.

Fearful of becoming Hussein's next conquest, Saudi Arabia and the other Arab Gulf states quickly joined that alliance. Egypt, Syria and Morocco eventually also sent troops. Arab countries sympathetic to Iraq, including Jordan and Libya, found themselves isolated.

Today the pendulum has swung back. Although the memory of Iraqi aggression remains, for most Arabs the present-day Iraq does not seem like that much of a threat. They are more likely to be moved by the plight of Iraqis after seven years of UN sanctions: A nation that was one of the region's richest and most advanced countries is now a

place where professionals hawk their personal possessions simply to eat.

Instinctively, the Arab street favors anyone who stands up to US "bullying," and anti-US feelings are running especially high now because Clinton is viewed as having forsaken the Palestinians in their peace talks with Israel, analysts say. Arabs accuse the United States, the main sponsor of the peace process, of not putting pressure on Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to make even minimal concessions.

"Why is it always the Arabs that the Americans bully? They haven't done anything to Israel," said Said Sombol, an Egyptian political analyst.

"There ought to be equality in treatment," Jordanian political analyst Mustafa Harmaneh said he was surprised by the bellicose rhetoric coming from Washington. Military action "will complicate the situation in

the region much further," he said. "There is absolutely no need, and it is an act of aggression."

A veteran Arab diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that under the present circumstances, he would advise the United States to try to turn down the temperature on the crisis with Iraq and leave resolving it as much as possible to the United Nations. Military action should be taken only if the United States can prove Iraq has acquired illegal weapons, he said.

Besides, any American attention just inflates the Iraqi leader, he said.

"The moment that a big power deals with Saddam, he starts to feel grand again. The big power should not be dragged along."

He said most Arab leaders would rejoice if Hussein was removed, because that would allow Iraq to rejoin the international community and end

the suffering of ordinary Iraqis. But that does not seem likely in the short run.

In a statement earlier this week, the Arab League secretary in Cairo made a mild appeal for a "cooperative spirit" by Baghdad but emphasized Arab countries' "complete rejection" of military action against Iraq.

There was a drumbeat of virulent anti-American commentary in most of the newspapers in the Arab world, and groups with a well-established track record of criticizing U.S. policy did not flinch in their rhetoric this time.

"We support Iraq in its rejection of America's provocative stand, and we condemn the aggressive position of the United States," declared Abdalaziz Ramtani, a leader of the Islamic militant group Hamas.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Letters to the Editor

Hail the democratic process

To the editor:

Many have criticized the recent elections to the Lower House of parliament, basing their discontent on the low voter turnout, the absence of the IAF, and the lack of issue-based campaigning. In response to these critics, who argue that Jordan's democratic transition is at stake, I argue that the process is only experiencing the growing pains that every democracy has experienced, and that the Jordanian democratic transition is not in any danger.

The growing pains that the Jordanian transition has experienced, demonstrate that a society has become more sensitive and responsive to the problems that incipient democracies face quite frequently. Numerous examples of liberalizing states, show that political discontent of certain parties is a normal thing. The IAF boycott does not mean that Jordanian democracy has lost.

The boycott is a matter of choice, the IAF was not forced to relinquish its right to political contestation. Had it been suppressed from democratic contestation, then the Jordanian people would have something to worry about.

The IAF made its own elective choice to boycott the elections to voice its discontent. This in my opinion reflects some level of political maturity in our system, simply because a political entity was allowed to freely express its discontent. With re-

spect to the low voter turnout, this may mean that the Jordanian people are satisfied with the status-quo, rather than opposed to it.

In most democratic systems, a high voter turnout is either related to a highly issue-driven election, or to popular discontent with status-quo politics. The 52% figure of voter turnout, is not necessarily low compared to other democracies such as the United States. I agree that the elections were somewhat devoid of thought-provoking issues. I believe that Jordan's democratic process has been a success, but it is still in a process of transition.

We are at the most crucial stages, and I am optimistic that the political maturity reflected by our society is key to the success of our democratization. It is interesting to note that political contestation is becoming more and more of a practice in our society as we see members of the same family or tribe running in competition with each other. The whole point of democracy is to provide a framework for political competition, contestation, and representation. A key element of our democratic process which I believe is a necessity for the success of our democratic experience, is the party system and party affiliation.

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Alliance and polarization

THE DANGERS of polarization and alliances in our region have been pointed out many times. But the recent developments regarding Iraq, indicate that the next century will provide entry to a different Middle East.

The emphasis on Iraq is not merely due to the importance of one state within the "other" state systems, but rather, to the fact that there might be a dangerous fall-out for all countries in the region, and beyond. If the current status-quo is deemed changeable, then the situation poses grave consequences for all.

Iraqi Kurdistan is already in a violent struggle with itself to impose the rule of one clan leader or another, but in the event of Iraqi disintegration, the Kurds are only likely to play the role of a thorn in the side rather than a winning card.

To entertain possibilities regarding Kurdish forces, in the event of any division of Iraq and the emergence of an alliance from the Euphrates Mountains to the plains of Lebanon, will be a big mistake. It is not far-fetched that an alliance of Iran, Syria and Lebanon can emerge.

On the other hand, Turkey is still searching for its own security, and destiny, having problems with Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Its relations with Israel continues to be plagued by inconsistencies, making the search for potential allies that provide the entry into the next millennium difficult.

Turkey's relations with the Independent Islamic Republics are governed by two important variables: Iran and Russia. For despite the ethnic and linguistic similarities, the Republics affinity has given way to competition with Iran, Armenia, could have provided some solace for Turkey, despite the long historical animosity, but her acquisition of Russian-made missiles may not contribute to better relations.

Adding to Turkey's woes, is the Greek-Cypriot acquisition of Russian-made missiles.

If Iraq disintegrates, and bits of it conform to the possible scenario indicated above, then the possibility of a major war would be inevitable. The situation is already dangerous, especially as an insecure Turkey, with potentially explosive relations with Iran, Iraq, Syria, Cyprus, Greece, and only civil relations with Bulgaria for the time-being, can only add to the tension in the region.

This can make the Arab-Israeli conflict seem like a picnic in the wilderness, and it is not the aim of this article to draw a bleak picture for the future, in as much as attempting to draw attention to the real dangers of changing the status-quo in Iraq without such a possibility.

Jordan has always warned against the emergence of confrontation zones of interest in the region, and we have ways stood for cooperation and policies of transparency and respect, but unfortunately "avarice" has taken over the better judgement of our partners and neighbors, but we must ensure that the price of "avarice" will not be paid by us.

As a future scenario for a potential disaster may seem that, the concept of regionalism and of cooperation and solidarity, will be formed into its negative image, that of a "bait" that will consume all spare none to tell tale.

Middle East Beat
by
Hani Janbek
Alliance and polarization

THE DANGERS of polarization and alliances in the region have been highlighted by the recent developments regarding Iraq. The fact that the next century will provide entry to a different Middle East.

The emphasis on Iraq is not merely due to the importance of one state system, but rather, to the fact that the region is a dangerous place for all countries in the region, and beyond. If the current situation is not resolved, the region will become a dangerous place for all countries in the region, and beyond.

Mr. Khatib is also a member of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association. He is a member of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association. He is a member of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association. He is a member of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association.

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Business scene

■ The capital of the Industrial Development Bank has been doubled from JD 12 million to JD 24 million. Such a step is seen by the Bank's general manager, Rajab Al Sae'd as a measure to meet the shortly expected industrial boom in the Kingdom and to meet the needs of national industry. One of the Bank's objectives is to help industrial firms achieve the ISO 9000 certificate which has become a necessity amidst global challenges and requirements to cope with the high standard quality specifications. During last year, the Industrial Development Bank provided loans worth JD 110,684 million. The Bank has generated profits estimated at JD 2.9 million last year.

It is planning to issue corporate bonds valued at JD 10 million within the framework of a finance package, in order to finance scheduled industrial projects in the country.

Also the capitals of the Bank of Jordan and the Jordan Islamic Bank were recently increased through capitalization of the optional reserve and turnover earnings.

■ Total assets of the Jordan Hotels and Tourism Co. recorded a rise during the first half of this year of 21 percent to reach JD 25.67 million. However, traded assets declined by 60 percent compared with the first half of last year. Operational revenues of the company were JD 4.81 million, showing a fall of 16.8 percent compared with the mid-annual results of 1996. The company's mid-annual profits in 1997 recorded a reduction of 30.9 percent against the same time last year. They are estimated at JD 1.78 million.

■ The volume of Israeli investments in Jordan till the end of last October, stood at JD 1,243 million, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The tourism sector maintains the highest stake, followed by the industrial and services sectors. The statistics reveal that Israeli investors own 20,000 equities in Al-Barakat Industrial Co. (in the free zone), 200,000 shares in Al Rayan Foodstuffs Co. and 700,000 shares in Al-Salam for Development and Industrial Investments. Added to these are many Israeli shares in Salameh Abu Hani and partners (20,000), 3500 equities in Salah Rifai and Ahmed Mousa and 100,000 shares in Mazen Al Harbawi and partners.

Foreign Exchange

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US\$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
FF	0.4801	0.4825
YEN	0.1227	0.1233
SGD	0.5624	0.5652
HK\$	0.3667	0.3685
JPY	0.0419	0.0421

Controversy over Doha conference still continues

On the Arab arena, the boycott camp is still adamant. Of the approvals given by 40 countries to attend the Doha conference, only seven Arab countries have verbally showed willingness to participate. Boycotters are making their participation conditional on achieving positive steps in the peace process

By Ilham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

THE CONTROVERSY over the fourth economic summit of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA IV) continues to be the subject matter of people's interest on the local, regional and international arenas. There seems to be local support for the convening of the conference on its scheduled date, on its 16-18 November in Doha.

Though not too enthusiastic about the venue, Jordanians (including businessmen, activists in the private sector, economic experts and even ordinary people) take the issue of attending the Doha conference as an inevitable step to prevent driving a wedge in inter-Arab relations, mainly between Jordan and Qatar.

Despite the size of benefit which had accrued to Jordan from the last three MENA summits the official attitude is not to follow the boycott camp.

"The presence of Jordan in the venue (which was downgraded from a summit level to a conference) or in any regional, Arab or international meetings enhances its image in front of Arab and foreign businessmen," Mr Farouk Al Hadidi, director-general of the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCO) tells *The Star*.

Through meeting with investors and businessmen face to face, Al Hadidi adds, "we can promote investment opportunities in Jordan and inform those who are willing to employ their capitals in this country about incentives provided to encourage foreign investments."

To achieve this objective the share allowed for foreign investors has been lately increased by the government to about 100 percent in some economic sectors.

When talk focuses on big investments and enterprises which require giant worldwide finance, Jordanian investors can seize the initiative.

Also, according to the director of the Exports Development Department in JEDCO, Mr Mo'ayad Al Samman, Jordan's presence in any economic forum will by itself reflect positively on its economy.

"This time Jordan is taking part in the conference with a big delegation (53 members including four ministers and representatives from the private sector) hoping to promote tourism, exports and investment opportunities in the country," Al Samman says.

In his view, it is not necessary to predict whether Jordan will benefit or not from its participation. "The conference will be convened in a brotherly country which has warm ties with us; participants will also be some Arab countries, mainly from the Gulf, an area which

can serve as active markets for our products."

Some people also look at the Qatar Conference as the gate that will open the way for employees and Jordanian manpower to flock back to the Gulf countries as it was the case before the last Gulf War.

Mr Sa'adi Ali, an unemployed engineer says "we hope that the conference will come up with mutual agreements between Jordanian and Qatari businessmen to run factories or plants either in Jordan or in Qatar." Certainly, some unemployed Jordanians might expect such opportunities. However, such expectations could be far-fetched.

On the Arab arena, the boycott camp is still adamant. Of the approvals given by 40 countries to attend the Doha conference, only seven Arab countries have verbally showed willingness to participate. Boycotters are making their participation conditional on achieving positive steps in the peace process.

Saudi Arabia seems to insist on boycott, it is backed by Syria and the United Arab Emirates. Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak has lately made a visit to Saudi Arabia to discuss the matter with the Saudi King. Saudi Arabia announced it is boycotting, while President Mubarak still manoeuvres that his country will attend if the

current peace talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis come up with tangible results.

Lately, a media campaign was launched between Qatar and Egypt, as the latter has called its ambassador to Qatar for being attacked by the Qatari press. However, Qatari officials stress that the relations between the two countries are good and assure that they won't take a reciprocal action.

But, observers argue that the last summit held in Cairo was convened in just similar political conditions, and the tension between the parties involved in the peace process was also the same. However, Mubarak, who has formerly insisted on convening the Cairo Summit in time, and ignoring any talk of boycott, this year, is criticizing Qatar for holding the conference in such unstable political conditions.

Despite this, Qatar is moving ahead in its preparations for the venue (including hotel bookings for delegations, securing transport facilities, reception services and other related measures) to provide media coverage.

Qatari officials and organizers of the conference expect most Gulf countries to participate, mainly from the private sector.

They are also being diplomatic to the Arab countries that are boycotting. Palestinian businessmen announced

lately that they will boycott the venue.

On the international level, the US is giving much effort to make the meeting a success and get the approval of the majority of Arab countries. Last week, its Assistant Secretary of State, Martin Indyk made a tour of the Gulf States urging them to attend the conference.

Experts argue, since the US is the sponsor of these summits that were originally a translation of the peace pacts launched in the region since 1993, it will consider it as big failure to the whole process if such a conference is boycotted by Arabs.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy still did not give a final decision either. He is expected to make up his mind within the next few days.

Concluding, it is still premature to give precise possibilities concerning the conference. Even at this late stage, it is still open to surprises, unexpected decisions or developments to occur from one minute to the next.

Government to sell 40 percent of its stake in JTC

THE GOVERNMENT is moving on in selling some of its stake in operating companies in transport, telecommunications, cement, mineral water, tourism and other services. The aim behind such a move is to improve quality of local companies and meet global specifications and standards.

According to the privatization philosophy, this will secure more finance for services and make the private sector more active. Thus, the burden on the state coffers will be reduced.

Already, the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications has increased the stake offered for sale in the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC) from 26 percent to 40 percent. Currently, the ministry is promoting the sale and looking for a strategic partner or more to enter into international tenders to buy these shares.

determined by the beginning of next year. The government makes it a condition that the strategic partner should be with qualified experience in the field of telecommunications technology. He should also give proof that he has generated \$4.5 billion in revenues in 1996. Also, the partners has to maintain 5.5 million lines in service during 1997.

According to ministry officials, lots of offers have been provided by American, European and Japanese investors. However, Transport Minister Dr Bassam Al Saket was quoted as saying that the choice will be

as saying that the choice will be

China celebrates huge dam; critics decry damage

By Steven Mufson

SANDOUPING, China—Here what was once a scenic but treacherous bend in the Yangtze River's legendary Three Gorges, the Chinese government inched closer to realizing a vision that combines ambition worthy of pyramid-building Pharaohs with the destructiveness of open pit-coal mining.

As China's President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng watched through binoculars from a temporary reviewing stand on a gash in the ravaged shoreline, teams of drivers—most behind the wheels of giant Caterpillar dump trucks—pitched load after load of granite boulders into the voracious water to complete a man-made barrier and block the Yangtze's main channel.

The plugging of the world's third-longest river at its steepest and most perilous point marked a major—and some critics fear irreversible—step forward in the construction of the controversial Three Gorges Dam. The hydropower project, which will be the world's largest, is expected to cost at least \$29 billion, tower 610 feet over the current river surface, span 6,600 feet and create a reservoir that will force more than 1.2 million people from their homes.

National television broadcast live the final stage in building the temporary barrier that will shield the dam work site from the river, a task that makes the parting of the Red Sea seem simple by comparison.

For six and a half hours, a procession of oversized earth movers—118 per hour—dropped 45-ton and 77-ton loads of rock and gravel into a 33-foot gap in the barrier. At 3:15 pm, when the pool of water below the barrier grew still and the river above turned to join the water flowing through a temporary diversion channel, fireworks went off, ship horns blared, cheers went up from thousands of spectators on the shoreline and the brass band from the Navy's engineering institute struck up "Song for the Motherland."

Jiang hailed the event as "a remarkable feat in the history of mankind to reshape and exploit natural resources" and said it "embodies the great industrious and dauntless spirit of the Chinese nation."

And though Li didn't make a speech, the day marked a victory for the pretoler, a Soviet-trained hydrologic engineer who has championed the dam project for more than a decade.

Despite last Saturday's milestone, the wisdom of building the dam remains the subject of debate. When completed in 2009, Three Gorges will generate 18,200 megawatts of power, 50 percent more than South America's Itaipu dam, which is currently the largest dam in the world.

In the United States, the Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River in Washington state generates 6,800 megawatts of power.

The Three Gorges dam project will form a reservoir 412 miles long and inundate an

area seven times the size of the District of Columbia. The reservoir will bury 13 cities, 140 towns, 1,352 villages and about 650 factories. It will raise the water level by 577 feet, submerging hundreds of ancient archaeological sites and much of the base of the granite and limestone cliffs that line the gorges and are among China's greatest tourist attractions.

The dam's supporters call it a triumph of human determination and ingenuity, crucial for controlling lethal floods and generating clean, much-needed energy for China's populous Yangtze River valley, where a third of China's 1.2 billion people live. Whereas trackers on the river banks once strained on ropes to help boats up the river, the dam will enable oceangoing ships to travel 1,500 miles inland to the city of Chongqing.

Citing floods that have killed tens of thousands of people in the Yangtze River valley three times this century, Guo Shuyang, an official of the Three Gorges Project, said, "we will spend big money to solve big problems."

Critics, however, call the dam a mammoth folly, a triumph of human ego and political showmanship over reason, and an environmental catastrophe that will neither solve floods nor solve the region's development problems. Moreover, some hydrologists say the Yangtze's heavy load of sediment and its shifting floor of gravel will hamper the dam's turbines, fill the bottom

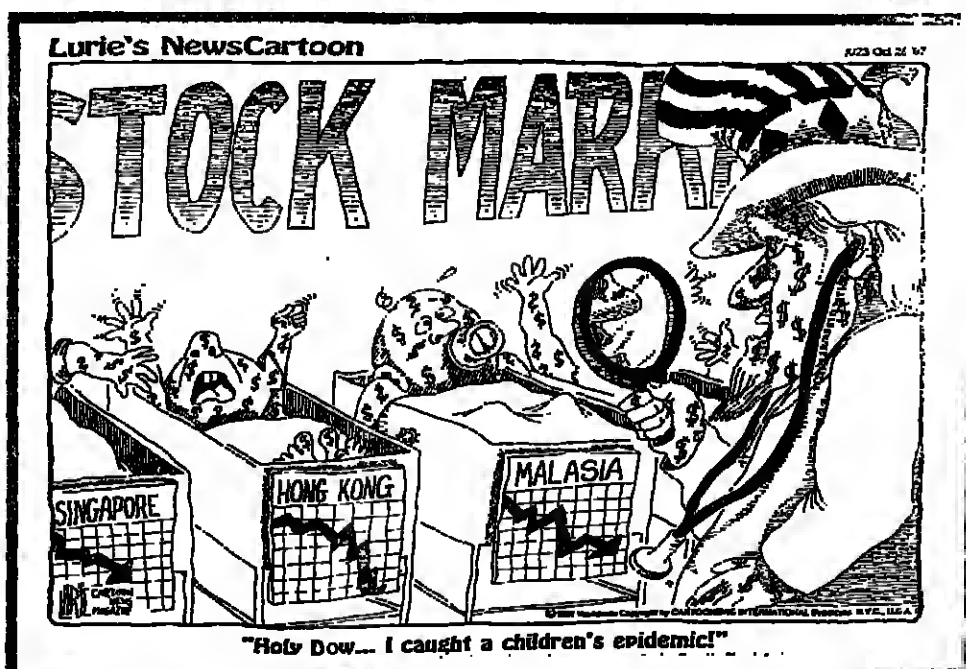
of the reservoir and cause even worse flooding.

"The Three Gorges Project is not a hydro-electric engineering project. It is a political project exhibiting all the characteristics of a centrally controlled socialist economic system," said Dai Qing, a journalist and leading critic of the dam. Charging that the government has suppressed negative information about the project, Dai said, "there is no freedom to express opposition to this project in China."

Amid the controversy, one thing is certain: the dam is big. A mountain has been reduced to rubble to make way for ship locks. Workers look like ants from the nearby road as dump trucks rumble by, carrying rocky soil away.

Work on the dam has proceeded quickly, which critics say is an attempt by Li Peng to bring the project to a point of no return before his term expires next March. Now that the river has been blocked, project managers here say they are in another race: to build up the temporary dam and beat the spring rains.

LA Times-Washington Post News Services



Mobile Quality lab to the Water Ministry

MINISTER OF Water and Irrigation Dr Munther Haddadin and US Ambassador to Jordan Mr Wesley Egan represented their respective countries at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation last week during which the US presented a Mobile Water Quality Laboratory to the Ministry of Water and Irrigation.

The laboratory, which was provided by the United States Department of State within the framework of the Regional Water Data Banks Project, will facilitate the collection and preservation of water samples from throughout the Kingdom, providing data necessary for Jordan's water managers to make informed decisions about the use, distribution, conservation and protection of Jordan's vital water resources. Because water quality analyses must meet stringent requirements that are difficult to attain on-site, the mobile laboratory meets the critical necessity of having a controlled environment in which to conduct water analysis at field locations. The laboratory consists of an air conditioned workspace mounted on a 40-

wheel-drive diesel truck. The laboratory's clean water system, independent electrical supply and sophisticated instrumentation will support the Ministry's need to carry out water quality sampling and analysis at field locations. It will complement the capabilities of the Ministry's central water quality laboratories.

United States experts will train Jordanians in the operation of the laboratory. The Regional Water Data Banks Project is supported by the United States, the European Union, France, Canada,

Norway and Australia. It has contributed a broad spectrum of resources to water agencies in Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, including training, equipment, and technical expertise in water data collection and analysis methods.

British Airways breaks new record

BRITISH AIRWAYS unveiled a new record for the six months ending September 30, 1997 and announced that it is raising the interim dividend payable to shareholders by 10.6 percent to 4 pence a share.

Chief Executive, Sir John Leahy, said: "These figures demonstrate the success of the business efficiency programme which is expected to deliver £200 million in savings this year and the need to be competitive in what is now a fiercely competitive global industry. The airline's

commitment to its customers and its dedication to providing a world-class service are also key factors in our success. The airline's strong financial performance is a testament to the hard work of our staff and the support of our customers."

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market			
SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab International Food Commercial Industry International Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arab Insurance Arab Investment Bank Commercial Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Islamic Bank Irish Electricity Arab Savings Investments Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Yogurt Jordan Islamic Bank Livestock & Poultry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Engineering Industries East Investment National Industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan Rock/Wool Industry International Trade Nayef Diet and Medicine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Cable International Trade Keller Plastics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United Lami Development Jordan Sulphur Chemicals Middle East Telecom
General Price Pointer: 170.359 Trade Volume: 893268 Stock Volume: 428246	General Price Pointer: 170.566 Trade Volume: 853252 Stock Volume: 489122	General Price Pointer: 170.840 Trade Volume: 1315300 Stock Volume: 538788	General Price Pointer: 171.020 Trade Volume: 781123 Stock Volume: 423331
Highest Traded Stocks: Phosphate Mines: 181249	Highest Traded Stocks: Al-Abul Bank: 140887	Highest Traded Stocks: Gulf Insurance: 304135	Highest Traded Stocks: Jordan Islamic Bank: 183807

Poland

An economy with a human face



Poland is open for business

POLAND IS open for business to the most frequently used phrase these days. At the heart of its economic strategy is the attraction of foreign capital. In 1996 alone foreign investment coming into the country registered a total of \$5.2 billion—it had been \$11.6 billion for the 1989-1995 period.

With thumbs up from reputable international institutions, the President of the Polish Agency for Foreign Investment (PAIZ), Waldemar Dabrowski says that "investing in Poland is no longer a business risk for the world's leading entrepreneurs. Instead, it is sound business sense."

Many international investors from across the globe are coming to invest in the country. The number of companies from the United States for instance is 77, from Germany 113, Italy

29, Netherlands 32, France 32, Britain 21, Sweden 30, Canada 19. But there are also companies from South Korea, Japan, China and Singapore.

The big names, which include Fiat, the car manufacturers, the Korean Daewoo, Mercedes Benz, Isuzu, and Nestle are all coming to Poland.

But that's not all. Foreign investments seem to be across the board. The Dresdner Bank, and Banque National de Paris are for instance, setting up branches in Warsaw.

After a 1995 poll of 864 foreign investors, PAIZ concluded that there are several factors which encourage foreign investment in the country. The greatest appeal lies in the low labor costs as compared to the countries of Western Europe, next came the size of the Polish market with a population of 39 million. This was followed by the prospect of economic growth as underlined by the availability of skilled labor.

At the end of 1996, 25 percent of all foreign investments in Poland was controlled by American companies. These had a holding of \$209.2 million. Most of the companies who have over 1 million worth of investments are American. Such companies include PepsiCo, Coca Cola, CITIBANK, Philip Morris, Procter and Gamble, Ford Motors, Good-year, Mars Inc., and RJ Reynolds Tobacco.

POLAND'S TRANSFORMATION from a command into a market economy since the early 1990's has been characterized by its suddenness. The process, although smooth, was described at the time as the "shock therapy treatment."

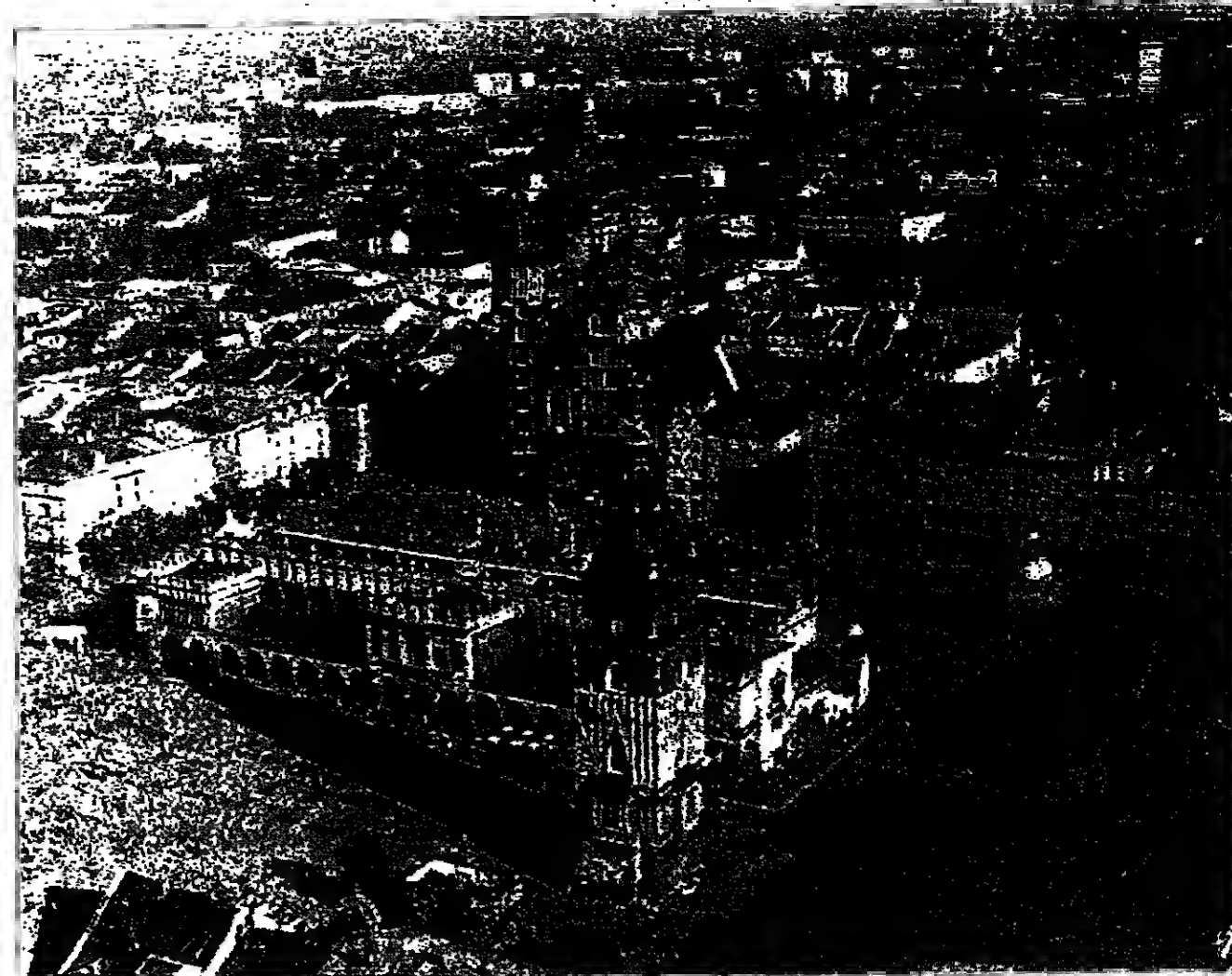
It involved rattling a docile economy that has long been dependent on the state into a more dynamic one, the hallmark of which is market forces, privatization and building a consumer-based society.

This also meant the liberalization of prices and trade, exports, openness through the removal of bottlenecks, and the encouragement of foreign capital to invest in the country. Red tape and bureaucratic routine, the process that hampers the private sector, and kills individual initiative is constantly being reduced down.

Private sector development during this period has increased. In 1996 the number of registered private companies stood at 220,700, that is 41 percent higher than the 1992 figure. In 1995, 45 percent of sold production was from private industry. Similarly 87 percent of construction was carried out by private companies, and 92 percent of commerce was in private hands.

Privatization in Poland follows a multi-dimensional approach. The selling off of state enterprises didn't only go to private individuals or companies, the government encouraged worker-ownership.

Exactly one year ago, 25.7 million Poles, or 95 percent of those eligible, have claimed their privatization vouchers. In 1995 only one in 10 said they would claim, while the govern-



A view of Warsaw

ment expected the figure to waver at 10 million.

And as a result, today Poles enjoy what is termed as the feel-good factor. A July 1996 opinion poll shows that a majority of families viewed their financial position as better than that of 1995 and expected a brighter future.

Economic figures prove that the feel good factor will continue. Between 1994-97 annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) registered an average annual growth rate of over six percent. In 1995 GDP was highest at seven percent, but the present leveling off is seen as a good thing. The rapid growth of the economy in the last few years and in a relatively short pace of time was becoming a source of concern. Talk of overheating, unnecessary shocks and overshooting was becoming widespread.

So the leveling suggested that the economy is now in a more stable mode, much more efficient and therefore in a better position to absorb the major

structural changes that occurred between 1990-1993. This meant that the economy is able to contain the economic fluctuations associated with the discipline-control of the free market and its supply and demand mechanisms.

Industrial production surpassed the 1989 level, while the Polish GDP in 1997 stands at 110 percent above the pre-transition level of 1989. Poland surpassed its east European neighbors whose production level in 1997 was only 75 percent of that of 1989.

What Poland needs, as the government recognizes, is a steady course of budgetary and fiscal control. Inflation continues to be too high at 18.5 percent in 1996, but was 38 percent in 1993. The trend however, shows that the government is on the right track by holding tight fiscal control.

Another success area is employment, although the trend is less dramatic. By 1996, the unemployment rate was 13.3 percent, 2.3 million of the

workforce. This went down from 16.9 percent in 1994.

Some Polish economic analysts suggest that there is what is termed as structural unemployment. If people, for example, are willing to move from one geographical area to another, then they would find work; northern Poland, and Silesia or Lodz, the home of the country's textile industry are another sources of employment.

But despite what is seen as the short-term recession's, the overall picture looks bright. In October 1993, a document was drawn up to make sure that Poland continues on the right track. A Strategy for Poland is a policy document designed to ensure that the government adheres to long term economic policies to underpin a liberal mixed economy. At the core of the document is the reform of the central administration, building more participatory institutions and creating a balance between state and private enterprises.

The last factor is an important one. Whereas after 1990, the philosophy was to privatize quickly, the Strategy for Poland, slowed it down where the public sector would continue.

However, the strategy did suggest the further need to continue to promote investment and growth, security in economic transactions, strict fiscal measures, a fairer tax system and a reform of the pension and social welfare system.

The Polish government has a clear view of creating an economy based on the market but one with a human face. This is in line with its commitment to join the European Union, the negotiations of which is to start in January 1998. Poland, together with Hungary and the Czech Republic have already been chosen to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). For more information concerning investment opportunities contact the Polish Embassy in Amman.

Confidence in the economy

THE GROWTH in industrial production in Poland, especially between 1994-1997, has won the praise of many international institutions. For one thing, the country has joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1995. Poland is reputed to have one of the fastest growth rates in the world. Because of this, it has been likened to the 'Four Tigers' (Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Thailand).

That's not all, the Kleinwort Benson's Report, which compared Poland favorably with Asia and concluded that in the medium term Poland can match, or even succeed, Asian productivity gains.

Indeed, the term has been coined: Poland is emerging as a tiger among the countries of the central and eastern European countries.

The Bank of England has identified Poland as the country with the greatest potential in the entire region.

The June 1996 Rating Report by the London-based Moody's raised Poland's credit-rating sky giving it the type of confidence international investors need to flock to the country. Other international agencies such as Standard and Poor and Moody's, all gave Poland top marks for its economic performance.

On the occasion of the Polish Independence Day on 11 November, a one-day Polish expo will be held at the Amra Hotel on 17 November at 6:30 pm. Entitled "Poland Closer 97," the aim of the expo is to increase bilateral trade relations between Jordan and Poland. On display are samples of Polish goods, catalogues and leaflets. Businessmen are coming especially from Poland to meet their Jordanian counterparts.

Facts and figures on the country

POLAND LIES in the heart of central Europe. It is a country that has strategic borders with seven countries: Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Germany.

Of Poland's total area, 60 percent is arable land, 28 percent forests and has a lot of water available. Poland is the world's 24th and Europe's 8th most populated country.

Today, its population stands at 38.6 million, of which 59 percent are of the employable age. The country is highly urbanized with 62 percent of the people living in the 860 cities and towns that are spread out. The population is likely to reach 40.3 million in 2010.

Poland is located at the intersection of Europe's main transportation routes leading from Western Europe to Belarus, Ukraine, and on to China, and from the Scandinavian countries to southern Europe and the Middle East.

At the end of 1995, Poland had 24,491 kilometers of railroads, 51.5 percent of which were electrified and nearly 19 percent had been upgraded to allow trains travelling at 120 kph. International flights are serviced by eight airports across Poland, including the country's most modern in the capital, Warsaw, while 12 airports handle domestic flights.

The Polish coastline on the southern shores of the Baltic Sea is serviced by three major ports: Gdynia, Gdynia and Szczecin-Swinoujście.

Poland has 169 border crossings, including 107 road crossings, 32 rail crossings, 5 river crossings and 8 air crossings.

Poland is well endowed in natural resources. It ranks among the leading producers and exporters of coal, sulphur, copper, and silver. The country has also significant deposits of



zinc, lead, natural gas, salt and other minerals.

In the area of coal, Poland is a leading country in extraction, having total deposits of 64.9 billion tons, and produces an annual total of 138 million tons. This makes the country nearly self-reliant for its energy needs, and means that it is the second largest producer and exporter of coal in Europe, after Russia, and the seventh largest in the world. At the present output level, it is estimated that the coal deposits

will last for the next 200 years.

Although the country has insignificant oil deposits, the current workable deposits of natural gas, estimated at 118.3 bmc, meets 33 percent of the country's demand. In addition, Poland has deposits of lignite estimated at 14.4 billion tons.

Poland is the world's eighth largest producer of copper and Europe's largest producer of silver. Most of the copper and silver extracted is exported to the countries of the European Union.



Poland is known for its castles, palaces and manor houses that are spread all over the country. In fact, these monuments reflect the rich historical tradition of the Polish state which is customarily dated from the year 966.

There are different types of castles and palaces that relate to different historical periods, and reflect the pomp and pageantry of Polish society.

Today's Warsaw Castle is noted for its historical significance, it presently functions as a museum and serve as a cultural center. Having been razed to the ground during World War II, the castle, which was built in the 13th century, was subsequently restored to its former glory.

The castle also reflected its development through the Pre-Romanesque, Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance architecture. But the Warsaw castle was a natural extension of the castles of the Kings of Poland that were built at the time when Cracow used to be the capital of the country.

Then there is the castles occupied by Magnates and Bishops, which over the years competed with the magnificence of the royal ones. But this was followed by castles of the Order of the Teutonic Knights of the 13th century. The first democratic Constitution was drawn up in 1791. This makes Poland the second country in the world, after the United States of America, to have a written constitution.



Everex E...
USA
Intel Pentium
280 MMX
32 MB EDO
RAM
128 KB
cache memory
2.1 GB HDD
14" Monitor
MAX CD-ROM
Multi Media
Inkjet Printer
For more information
Arabian Office
Tel: 698804, 68
or visit us at: http

Cars are symbol of the feel-good factor

THE CAR market in Poland has become a symbol of the country's economic success. One specialised periodical described the car market as sizzling, with sales sky rocketing for the first time in Polish history.

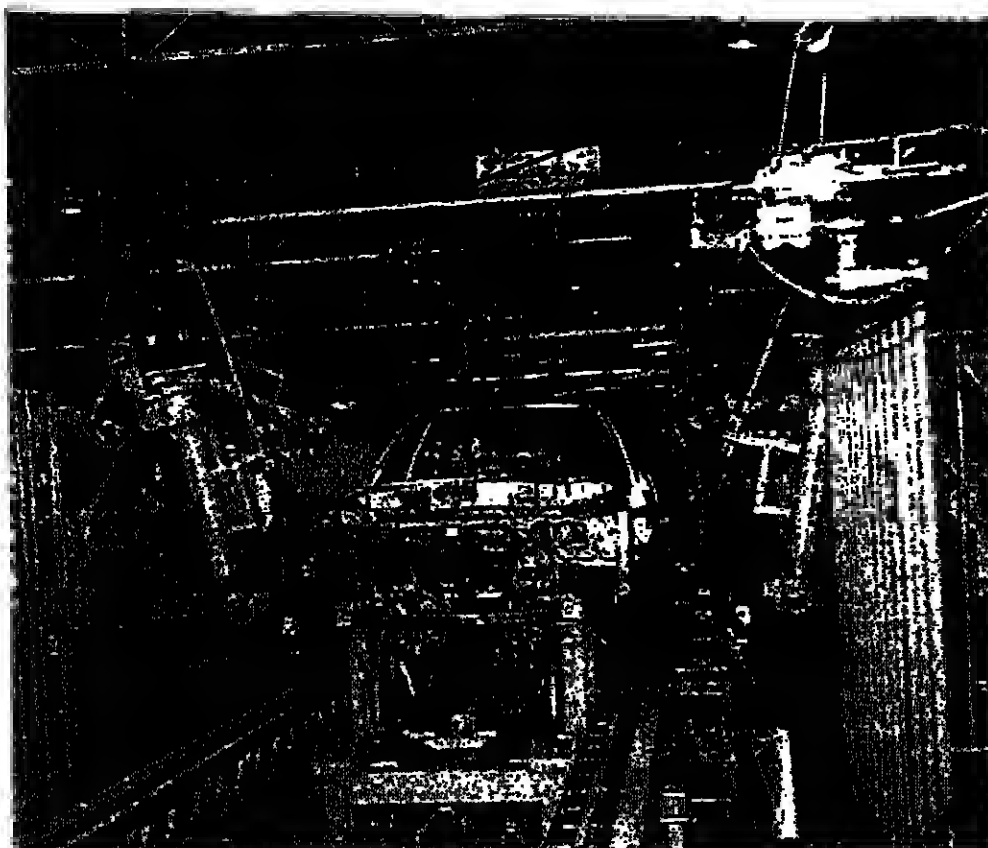
More than 373,000 new passenger cars were sold in Poland in 1996. In that year Poles bought 41 percent more cars than in 1995. In terms of car sales, Poland ranked highest in Europe, beating Norway, Britain, Germany and Italy.

Today, the country is the largest car market in Europe. Statistics show that Poles are buying more new cars than the citizens in the more affluent nations of Europe.

In Poland, there are about 180 cars per 1,000 residents, compared to 470 in Germany and about 420 in France.

Economists are attributing such an increase to the growth in the Polish economy, and in particular to the affluence of society and the emergence of the middle class who want to drive what is termed as good cars.

However, there are other factors. More accessible loans and a stronger zloty has played a strong role in boosting a car market because it has made western cars more affordable for Poles.



Motor manufacturing is becoming Poland's star industry

The car market in the country is composed of two segments: locally produced cars

and imported ones. The rate of imported cars increased tremendously in 1996. About

108,000 cars sold in that year were imported from abroad. What this means is that almost one in three cars brought by Poles was made abroad.

Fiat cars, which are produced in Poland are the most popular. In 1996 they produced 155,000 units, that's almost 48 percent of the market share.

This was followed by the Korean Daewoo. It sold nearly 60,000 units and took 16 percent of the market, and was then followed by the American General Motors selling more than 28,000 units there. The Opel Astra assembled in Poland is among the country's most popular models.

In 1996, more than 15,000

Astras were sold on the Polish market. Also the French Renault, which has a presence in the country sold more than 20,000 units. Skoda, Ford, Seat, Volkswagen and Peugeot also control major portions of the Polish market. Skoda, Ford and Seat assemble their cars in Poland.

One of the most exciting new comer on the market is the Daewoo company. Its cars, almost completely unknown in Poland, three years ago, won market share very quickly. The Nexia, Esparo, and Tico are assembled in Poland from imported parts from South Korea. In 1996 sales on these cars increased by 950 percent.

Similarly, Japanese cars are selling well in Poland. In 1996, Nissan sold 167 more cars than in 1995. Honda reported an 87 percent increase and Toyota 72 percent.

There was a mixed reception for German cars. Mercedes cars, once the most popular because of their reliability, durability and prestige, registered a 79 percent decline in 1995. Their decline couldn't be attributed to their high price, because BMW's, which are equally expensive cars, increased their sales by almost 200 percent in 1996.

The boom in car sales reflect the change of the times, the movement from communism to socialism. What is interesting is the increased choice and the greater variety and this inevitably means lower prices.

However, the Polish government has said time and again that it will give preference to overseas companies that produce, and not just assemble cars in the country. This is why experts say that a few years from now, Fiat, Daewoo and Opel will dominate the car market.



Brief glimpse of Chopin's home

THE MOST famous house, but extremely modest, in Poland that enjoys international renown is in Zelazowa Wola.

It was here, on February 22, 1810, that Frederic Chopin was born into the world, and it was here that this composer, one of the greatest of all time, spent his youth.

This estate is today visited by music lovers from all over the world, from Tokyo to San Francisco, and from Stockholm to Buenos Aires; they come here to wander around the lovely grounds, to admire the virtuoso pianists performing mazurkas or polonaises, and to obtain a feel for the *genius loci* of Chopin's family home, reaching down to the roots of his music and better appreciating the secret of its universally understood perfection.



The home where Chopin was born in

How about a festive penguin?

By Bill Glenton

MOST CRUISE ships sail in tropical seas in winter, so enjoying a white Christmas afloat is an unlikely prospect. But there is one destination where it can be guaranteed in plenty: how about tucking into the turkey among the penguins?

Festive season voyages are a big feature of the growing fleet of ships making cruises to the Antarctic and adjacent islands such as the Falklands and South Georgia to explore the wild life and magnificent ice-bound scenery.

Mostly small, specialist ships, they range from fairly luxurious expedition vessels to chartered Russian icebreakers and scientific survey ships. Since they carry few passengers, they can offer a more intimate kind of party fun.

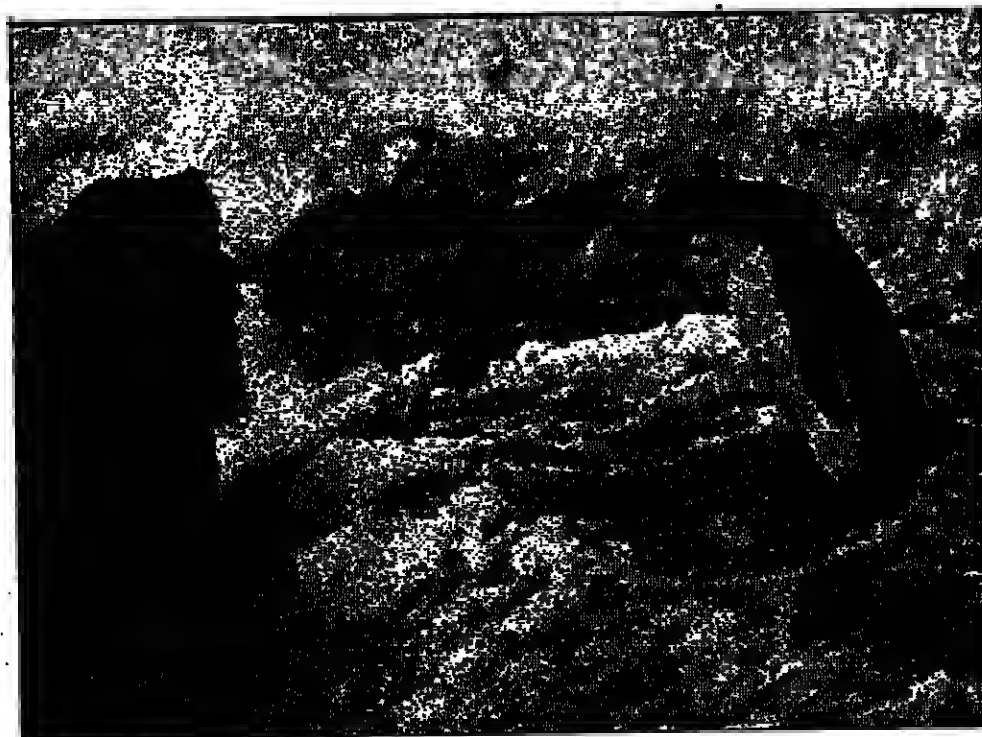
There will be plenty of traditional celebrations aboard one of the smartest of the ships, the 6,752 tonne Bremen, of Radisson Seven Seas Cruises. Passengers can enjoy their turkey in the tiny harbour of Grytviken on remote South Georgia after a service in its tiny church. Father Christmas comes complete with a local herd of reindeer.

Aboard other ships, which head deeper into the ice and snow, penguins, elephant seals and whales are more likely companions, while a few ships will bring Christmas cheer to scientists at isolated Antarctic bases.

One Christmas cruise that will appeal to those who prefer high C's to high seas takes you on a three-country musical tour across central Europe.

The 160-passenger river ship Roussee is making a week-long trip down the broad Danube through Austria, Slovakia and Hungary with calls at their capital Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest. Opera and concerts at these city venues will be a big feature of the cruise, while a special Christmas highlight is midnight mass at the ancient harpist's church of Melk in Austria's Wachau valley.

The well-equipped Roussee will also carry a string quartet to serenade aboard, along with other facilities. These include a roomy lounge, single sitting restaurant, observation



deck, two bars, shop and hairdresser. The compact cabins all outside come with small private shower/WC.

Celebrating the birth of Christ has been given a fresh impetus in Russia, where Christianity now revels in a new freedom. In St Petersburg it can be uniquely enjoyed from a floating base right in the city centre.

Christmas breaks are being offered aboard the Swiss-run hotel-ship Peterhof moored at the Makarov Quay on the River Neva close by the Hermitage and other important sights.

Normally the preferred choice of many western businessmen on weekdays, this 181-hed vessel becomes a popular tourist stay at weekends and holiday times, and offers both standard and deluxe accommodation.

As well as two restaurants serving western and Russian menus there is a panoramic bar, nightclub with live music, gym, sauna, shop, hairdresser and laundry. The ship's own travel agency sells city tours and tickets to the theatre, concerts and the Kirov ballet.

Vodka may well be a vital part of the Christmas spirit with

temperatures dropping to well below zero. Bring your ice skates in case the Neva freezes over.

Christmas is a truly joyful time for cruise lines. It is their busiest, most profitable time of year. They can charge higher rates and still fill their ships.

But the big attraction for most passengers is escaping the cold to enjoy hot sunshine in the warm water winter cruise regions. The festive fun in most ships is little different from the normal round-the-clock entertainment.

Father Christmas does pop down the funnel on many ships; turkey, pud and crackers are on the already overloaded menus, and midnight mass and carol services are often held.

But you need to pick your cruise carefully if you want it to be more than just another voyage. Some lines deliberately keep the festivities low key because they cater mainly for passengers seeking to get away from them ashore.

The best bet is one of the smaller, more luxurious ships such as those operated by Cunard, Seabourn and Radisson, which offer a more intimate family gathering atmos-

phere. The bigger vessels can be a wiser choice if you are taking children, with special fun organised for them.

Where you cruise is important if you seek the seasonal spirit ashore. Christmas is joyfully celebrated on the Caribbean islands, for example, but it is just any old time of year in places such as south-east Asia.

Radisson offers its 16-night cruise from Port Stanley, Falklands, for £6,000 to £11,000 with air fare extra. Cheaper Antarctic cruises are available from some other lines. Agent is Paul Mundy 11 Quadrant Arcade, Regent St, London, W1R 6JB (tel: 0171-287 906, fax 434 1410).

Danube cruise: Noble Caledonia, 11 Charles Street, London NW1 6QG (0171-616 1000) and Noble Caledonia (see Danube cruise) both offer holiday breaks in the Peterhof.

Prices are about £400 including flights. ■

Financial Times Syndication

The first people's princess

Royal Mourning and Regency Culture: Elegies and Memorials of Princess Charlotte, by Stephen C. Berendt. Macmillan £35. 256 pages

Reviewed by Antonia Fraser

Universal was the mourning, throughout all the United Kingdoms, and all the provincial towns and cities deplored the unumely blighting of England's most brilliant hope... Dejection was painted on every countenance, nor is it a false assertion to say, that almost every eye was wet with tears; and every public sign of woe that could be made was done... everyone appeared as if a dreadful misfortune, [was] attached to his own family.

No, these descriptions do not come from a United Kingdom recently devastated by the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, but from one lamenting the tragic death of another Princess 170 years earlier: Charlotte, daughter of the Prince Regent, Stephen C. Berendt, author of *Royal Mourning, and Regency Culture: Elegies and Memorials of Princess Charlotte* is George Holmes Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Nebraska. I do not know where he was on August 31, 1997, but I cannot help thinking that the death of Diana Princess of Wales must have filled him not only with the general sadness but also with a startling sense of déjà vu.

The similarities are indeed quite eerie, although Berendt was presumably writing at least a year before the recent tragedy. Both women were young by the standards of their time, Charlotte being 21 at the time of her death in 1817. Both deaths were in a sense accidental. Princess Charlotte died in childbirth, after delivering a stillborn son, and although Diana's successful motherhood might seem to put her in a different category, one might plausibly argue that the car crash is the late-20th century equivalent of early-19th century maternal mortality: unexpected, horrifying, and striking all too often at the young.

In both cases, the royal fam-



ily was held in low public esteem at the time of the princess's death in contrast to the princess herself. The rose is also a common theme. One thinks of Elton John's line "England's rose" as one gazes at a fascinating illustration of 1817 by P.W. Tompkins entitled "The Royal Rose" in which Princess Charlotte's youthful face peers out of the heart of the flower. In another memorial print, the accompanying text consisted of an acrostic of Charlotte's initials, beginning: "Charm, farewell, since thou must go, Heaven sent thee but a while to cheer a Nation's gloom, a Nation's woe restoring Royal Virtue here..."

The implication is clear: without Princess Charlotte, Royal Virtue will be in short supply. The radical or even republican use of Princess Charlotte's image after her death provides yet another parallel. Regency commentators used Princess Charlotte's demise to ride their own hobby-horses. The Poet Laureate Robert Southey was quite honest about his intentions in a letter to a friend as he planned to write a general critique of society: "An obvious objection to this is, that I make use of an event which ought to be my subject, merely as an introduction to something else. Perhaps this may be handsomely obviated by frequently referring to it [the Princess's death] and bringing it again prominently forward at the end."

Many articles following Princess Diana's death seem to

have been planned along these principles.

It is, however, in his consideration of the personal grief of the public in the autumn of 1887 that Berendt provides, unconsciously, the strongest parallel with our own experience. When Berendt refers to "the deeply held proprietary sense among the people generally regarding the princess [Charlotte]," he is touching on something which is clearly universal where popular young royals are concerned.

It is only fair to the future chroniclers of the life of Diana Princess of Wales who would benefit enormously from this diligently-researched book in terms of historical perspective to point out at least one difference. The commercialisation of a royal death may remain the same, with commemorative pottery a shared theme. But Princess Charlotte (and her stillborn son) did not get a public funeral; on the contrary, according to the then royal usage, the obsequies for the mother were held in St George's Chapel, Windsor at two o'clock in the morning, the baby being buried first without any ceremony at all.

It is in fact St George's Chapel which contains the marvellous white marble group commemorating Princess Charlotte, by Matthew Wyatt, son of James Wyatt. Veiled mourners kneel before a similarly shrouded corpse, while a resurrected figure is about to take flight, escorted by angels. But here we return to the expressions of public discontent in common to both tragedies. An enormous public subscription was raised for this commemorative statue only to have the statue placed in a chapel which was not in the public domain.

The *Literary Chronicle* and *Weekly Review* wrote that "the public will hear with amazement" that the monument, to which so many had given money, would be secluded from view. "The monument is not private property, which an individual, be his station ever so high, can do what he pleases with." Perhaps there is a lesson here. ■

Financial Times Syndication



Queen Noor patronizes UNESCO charity event in Paris

Her Majesty Queen Noor patronized a charity event that was organized by UNESCO in Paris for underprivileged children whose number exceed 100 million around the world. The event was attended by the Secretary-General of UNESCO, F. Mayor, and top international signatories.



Chopin takes first place at Darat Al Funun



Hassan Al Mufti playing at Darat Al Funun. Al Mufti, who was born in 1965, is one of the great up and coming talents of today.

By a Star Staff Writer

IT WAS music to the ears. The musical performance that took place at Darat Al Funun was a night to remember. On the Occasion of the Polish Day of Independence, a special musical event was performed.

The evening was a tribute to the music of Frederic Chopin, who this year celebrates his 148th birthday. As usual the performer was Hassan Al Mufti, a well-known Iraqi talent, who gave a full recital to Chopin's most famous musical pieces.

The evening, which was jointly organized by Freddy For Music and the Polish Embassy in Amman, proved an extraordinary treat.

As expressed by the huge number of people who attended, the event proved a great success. The audience just went into what can only be described a stupor as Al Mufti played the great musical pieces of the Polish master.

The performance was divided into two parts. The first included the Waltz, op. 4 no. 1 and the Spheryz op. 31 was played so beautifully that you felt the little house running into a thunderous applause. The highs and lows of the musical notes, the thumps and the crescendos in a vintage style Chopin.

The second part was equally thunderous, the logical conclusion of which was Chopin's nocturne op. 9 no. 2, and Polonaise op. 23.

What is interesting about Chopin, who was born in Poland in 1810 to a French father and a

Polish mother, is that his music comprises the soft, almost harmonious pieces with the high notes on the musical board.

As in the prelude op. 28 no. 15, the music starts by the soothing tones, reaching higher and higher up with the sudden thunderous tones and then casually going down.

What is important to remember is the synchronization of the music, each followed the other to a T. There was no sharp shrills or cuts.

And this was due to his disciplined background. It was at the age of eight, in 1818, that the young Chopin gave his first public performance in Warsaw; he was indeed regarded as a child prodigy by his contemporaries.

It was in his early years that his music came to develop from that of a novice into a great master. At the age of 10, and in 1820, he wrote the musical piece "March" which was dedicated to the Grand Duke Constantine.

During the recital one could feel both the intensity and the softness of the musical pieces. This indeed reflected the diversity of Chopin's work.

In the intermission, a member of the audience told *The Star* that after a hard days work, it is nice just to come here and "close one's eyes, and just listen to the music."

Mary Daoud from Freddy Music, later said that the organizers just didn't expect so many people to turn up. But what the evening showed is that more and more events of this kind should be put on in Amman.

Music needed for our very inner souls

By Christian Doumit
Special to The Star

THE post-Wagnerian period found music in confusion, with the best composers exhausting themselves in the search for a breach in the legacy of Beethoven and Wagner, and with some of them deceiving themselves with virtuoso verbiage. This lack of direction in this fin de siècle music caused an asymmetry of musical phraseology which was somehow similar to free verse.

Music rests essentially on melody, and every melody has a certain construction. And although some central keys are never abandoned, the developing lines are broken and harmonies constantly shifting.

The Incanto Trio Ensemble—Guido Schiefen (Cello), Ralph Manno (Clarinet), and Liese Klahn (Piano) gave a concert Saturday night at the Royal Cultural Centre in celebration of His Majesty King Hussein's Birthday.

The concert was organized by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the Goethe Institut—which incidentally under its new director Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, is making a comeback on the Jordanian scene with a vengeance.

The program was extremely well-selected, and included Poulenc's Sonata for clarinet and piano, Debussy's Sonata in D Minor for cello and piano, Schumann's Märchenzyklen (Tales for Maidens) for clarinet, cello and piano and Brahms Trio in A Minor. By the time we got to Brahms, the great energizing features of Poulenc, Debussy, and Schumann had all but vanished. If Poulenc overflows with joy, exuberance, and beautiful melodies, Debussy with sensuality and color, Schumann's Märchenzyklen sparkles with life and optimism and is relatively free of the obstinate rhythmic patterns that characterize his other instrumental works.

Some of the parts of Märchenzyklen are tender and poetic, for in the domain of lyricism Schumann was at his inimitable best. Here the beauty is in the details which vary between mood—sometimes within a few measures.

With Brahms after the intermission, there was a feeling of an anti-climax which was felt by the audience. Brahms is languid, relaxed, valetudinary. His trio op. 114 which anticipates his famous quintet for clarinet and strings is a composition of incomparable nobility of thought and sound. His gracious "andantino" in the third movement is the work of a great musical poet.

The great art attained by Brahms makes his work classically poised, but one feels that this calm and poised hide something, a tragic philosophy, a world outlook of pessimism and melancholy which he tried to combat with discipline.

Indeed no one among his contemporaries approaches as near the ideal of Beethoven or felt equally at home in all domains of music (except opera) as Brahms. There is more color in Brahms than we tend to think.

His tragedy, the tragedy of all sensitive, aristocratic souls devoted to tradition and a moral obligation to the past is that he was born too late and that Beethoven's shadow followed him everywhere.

With the end of this century in sight, the computer age and the culture it has spawned, lack of spiritual ideals, submission to materialism, and global hunger for sensation and bluff, we do need a Brahms revival more than ever to help us perceive the finest in the past.

Puskin's reflects the ambience of Russia in Amman

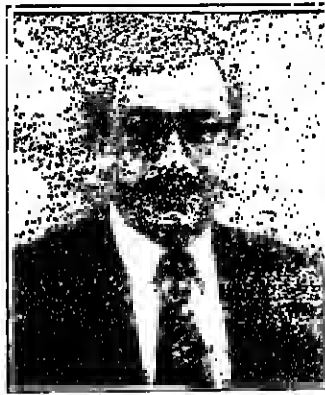
THE GARDEN Palace Hotel is the newest in town. Situated in Wadi Al Tal Street (formerly Gardens Street), it seeks to bring the best kind of hospitality for any visitor coming to Jordan.

Its General Manager Amr Batrani says that the hotel has many distinctions that are designed to offer the best in hotel catering. The 40-room hotel reflects the true ambience of Jordan. The Garden Palace Hotel has many facilities, and is equipped with a sports center besides a swimming pool that will help you unwind any time of the day, noon, and night.

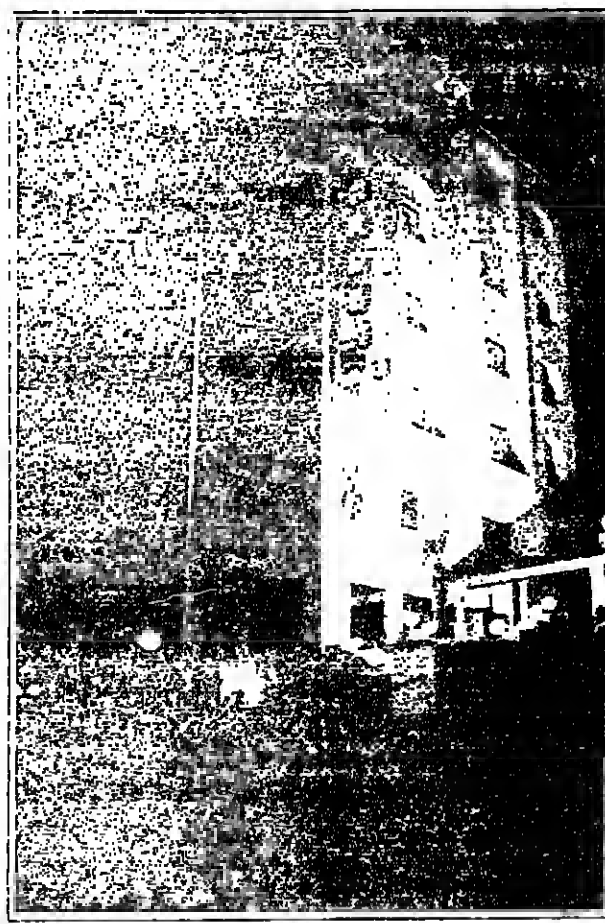
Although, its a Three Star hotel, the services it offers matches Five Star ones.

Added to this, the Grand Palace Hotel offers exquisite cuisine and entertainment. The Alexandre Puskin Restaurant is exclusive, serving very special Russian dishes in Jordan. What is interesting is that all the decor, and paintings reflect a true Russian atmosphere.

Puskin was one of the most famous poets in Russian history. His grandmother was originally an Arab who came from Yemen, according to Dr Hilal Al Kilani, the owner of the Grand Palace Hotel, a Jordanian businessman who lives in Russia.



Batrani



Macarena and Parké cafes represent new atmosphere in Amman

AMMAN (Star)—Cafes are becoming widespread particularly in West Amman. What this means is that people can have a good night out for a lower price. Two of the more modern establishments are the Macarena Cafe on the Gardens Street and the Parké Cafe in Al Babieh.

What is unusual about these two cafes is their names. Macarena, as everybody knows, is a famous Italian song. The cafe presents the cool atmosphere that reflects what is new and fun in Amman.

Parké is another Italian word that simply means "why". And the reason for going into this coffee bar, again, reflects a different atmosphere that is designed to smooth and relax the clientele. These cafes are not only for the young or the old. They are designed for everybody.

The ambience is very important, because they reflect the European touch. The decor, the feel of the place, and the service, gives you the feeling that you are somewhere else.

However, the oriental feel is still there. As part of the scene, the management puts on soothing music designed to give you the kind of relaxation that is not found anywhere else.

These cafes are presently preparing themselves for the Ramadan season. Special drinks, pastries, and of course the Argileh, are available.

The Cafes of Amman is not a new phenomena. What it shows however, is that there is a great demand for these places.

The Hussein Harb tournament at the Inter.Con



Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan is holding in cooperation with Mr Ali Farid Al Sau'd, chairman of the Football Federation for Jordanian Companies, the Hussein Harb Tournament to be held on 27-28 November.

Hussein Harb has a strong passion for the game of football, and served as a goal keeper for the Inter-Continental team.

On 10 August, Harb and other hotel employees went for a routine game of football practice to prepare for the annual Middle Eastern tournament held in Cairo.

He was involved in a fatal car crash, which put him in a coma. On 16 August, Hotel Inter-Continental and the Jordanian community lost a close friend and an honourable citizen. Harb left behind a wife and two beautiful daughters.



"Fools! They made me into a free-range chicken and man, I never looked back."



Explorers from another cartoon are captured and tortured by the savage Farsikians.



"Nerd! ... Dang!"



Cornelius! I've been watching him! ... Beware of the jawbone!"

AGENDA	
Exhibitions ■ Art Exhibition titled <i>Journeys Within</i> by the Pakistani pioneer artist Gulgee and his son the sculptor Amin Gulgee, opens at Jordan National Gallery for Fine Art on 16 November. It continues till 15 December. ■ The Graphics and oil paintings by Mu'ayyad Al A'dhumi at the Royal Cultural Center, ends today Thursday 13 November. ■ Paintings by Bahraini artist Sheikh Rashid Al Khalifa continues at Darat al Funun till 15 November. ■ Art Exhibition by Patrice Cudemec continues at the	French Cultural Center till 26 November. ■ <i>Encounter</i> displaying rugs by Japanese textile designer Tomoko Iyoda at Bani Hamida fall exhibition continues till 25 November. ■ An Exhibition of Jewel at Darat al Funun continues till 15 Nov. ■ Accessories Exhibition from Wadi Rayan, handicrafts and gift items at Jordan Rivers Designs Showroom continues till 23 Nov. ■ Art Exhibition by the Syrian artist Khalid Al Miz continues at the Baladna Art Gallery till 22 November

THURSDAY

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12:0

3:30

5:00

6:30

هكذا من الأهل

THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

By Zeid Nasser
Special to The Star

THE MIDDLE East Technology Show (METS) '97 opens to the public today, with around 35 computer hardware, software and information technology companies exhibiting their latest products and services.

METS is the largest information and technology event in the country, held annually towards the end of the year, by the Jordan Computer Society.

This year, under the slogan of 'Solutions' the show aims to introduce comprehensive information technology solutions to visitors, highlighting the skills of Jordanian companies in integrating products and services to fill the needs of different customers whether home or office users.

The idea behind METS is to bring together all the suppliers of information technology solutions in the country under one roof, which is why the show represents an excellent opportunity for computer hardware and software buyers.

Every year, participating companies provide special pricing schemes and incentives during METS, which is something

Computer & IT companies

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us on 648298 or email us at Star@NETS.com.jo with your news and views.

With the efforts of the Jordan Computer Society (JCS): METS '97, bigger & better

THE JORDAN Computer Society (JCS) is the organizer of the Middle East Technology Show (METS). The JCS is a professional body made up of computer and information technology professionals working in both the computer market and in public and private organizations as computer specialists. Since its establishment, the JCS has aimed to develop the 'computing' profession and

holds numerous activities every year including seminars, lectures, exhibitions, open day activities and social events.

The JCS committee behind METS is responsible for providing the Jordanian public with an impressive, annual computer and information technology show.

Their events are voluntary. For more information on the JCS, contact Mr Adwan Barghout at telephone 683549.



INTERFACE AND NASSER

METS time, bargain time!

IT'S METS-time again and the Jordanian computer market is bustling with activity. In fact, whether computer companies in the country participate in METS or not, they're bound to have special offers or slashed prices this time of year. For some reason, the third quarter of the year always brings with it a sweeping wave of discounts and bargains.

So, it's worth taking a look at the average prices you would expect to pay for computer hardware and software. First, the big news is the arrival of the Pentium II in Jordan, which has meant a drop in the prices of 200 MMX Pentium systems. In fact, locally assembled PCs with such a processor, and a minimum of 16MB RAM and a 2 Gigabyte hard disk, are being priced between JD 640 and JD 750. This, of course, is an amazing deal for such cutting edge technology and speed.

Add a 24 times the speed CD-ROM, 16 bit card and speakers (multimedia kit) and you can expect to pay an extra JD 125 to JD 150. So, in all, you can get a lean, mean PC machine for around JD 850! Now, that's amazing.

If you would rather purchase a brand-name PC, whether American or Taiwanese, you will have to pay something extra. In the case of Taiwanese systems, the added cost is around JD 150 to JD 200, which is reasonable considering their higher quality. As for an American PC, with a 200 MMX processor and multimedia, you're budget will have to break the JD 1,050 mark, and may run well into JD 1,400, depending on the brand.

As for printers, the great news is that laser printers have sunk in price allowing you to get a 600dpi unit of as little as JD 400 in some cases. Also, color ink-jet printers are dropping in price and witnessing an impressive growth in quality—some offer up to 1440 dpi—and their prices range from as low as JD 160 to as high as JD 370 for mid-user models. Some leading PC suppliers are offering a 200 MMX Pentium PC with a color inkjet printer (without multimedia) for just under JD 1,000. Also, accessories in general are witnessing price drops. Color flatbed scanners have fallen in price to around JD 280, for example, and its quite impressive to see how much power is being offered at the user's desktop at a lower cost! Modems have dropped in price too, with many reliable brands being offered at JD 95 to JD 110 for external models. Such prices were completely unheard of only a few months ago. Of course, once you've got a modem, you'll need to subscribe to an Internet or on-line service. The good news is that the cost of an Internet hour has dropped significantly—to around JD 1 and 600 fils on average—and sinks lower than that if you purchase a substantial number of hours.

A visit to METS is a good idea to check out such price drops in hardware and services. Who knows, maybe you'll walk away with the best deal you could ever imagine. One thing is for sure, at these prices, you're already getting your money's worth!

NETS@METS

NATIONAL EQUIPMENT & Technical Services (NETS) is participating in METS '97 and is exhibiting the new version of its on-line software, namely FirstClass Intranet Server, that is packed with new features such as support for all types of file formats and attachments. Users will be relieved to know that there is no more need for decoding and encoding. It also offers the ability to read a user's mail directly from a browser and a much more.

In addition, NETS will be demonstrating its new Internet service as well as the newly developed web site, that is receiving rave reviews. NETS invites visitors to come and meet the people behind the service, and take advantage of the attractive Internet plans on offer. In addition, during the show all NETS staff will be ready to handle inquiries and answer questions, regardless of the nature.

METS '97 opens to the public, showcasing a large selection of products and services:

Jordan's annual computer celebration begins



History of Jordan's computer sector in the making: Scenes from METS in previous years

to look out for if you're shopping for a good deal. To find out what is the price for any hardware or software item, one round in the show should provide you with all the information you need to make a buying decision.

In keeping with a new aspect to the show, which started last year, there is a strong presence of Internet Service Providers, on-line services, bulletin board services and Web design and publishing firms.

These companies represent a substantial presence in the show, as they do in the Jordanian information technology sector. So, if you'd like to gain more knowledge on the nature of Internet and on-line service,

METS '97 is the place to visit.

What's more, Global One and NETS—two Internet Service Providers at the show—will offer visitors the opportunity to navigate the Internet at their booths.

Also, giving the show a more

regional flavor, there will be a Palestinian Wing including participants from the West Bank and Gaza (Palestinian computer and IT companies). So, METS '97 represents a co-operation opportunity with these companies, and it should provide to be interesting to examine the products that the Palestinian companies will have on show. To begin with, the Jordan Computer Society intended for its show to be 'regional', which

is why it was called the Middle East Technology Show. However, several years into the event, it hasn't managed to develop into a large-scale regional computer and IT event. Still, it does attract some regional attention, as it is the primary showcase of the Jordanian computer sector, with many companies being active on the regional level. In fact, several Jordan-based companies

participating in METS are the regional—or Middle Eastern—representatives of their products.

In any case, the efforts of the Jordan Computer Society (JCS) have to be commended for continued success of METS and the huge attendance of visitors every year. This year, the JCS looks towards breaking new ground in terms of visitor numbers.

At METS '97, the sponsor companies are BYTE Middle East magazine, computer Networking Services (CNS), Arabia On Line, Access, ARAMEX, Fun Directory and Telecommunications Equipment & Networking Co. (TEN).

Participants this year include Ideal Group, Global One, TISGroup, Smart Systems, Abu-Irmaleh Co. for books, Unifone, Abdul-Majid Marayja Co., MDP Consultants, Specialized Technical Service (STS), United Interna-



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الجمعية الأردنية للحاسبات تدعوكم لحضور فعاليات



معرض الشرق الأوسط للتكنولوجيا

١٣ - ١١ تشرين الثاني ١٩٩٧

في قاعة معرض عمان الدولي - مرج الحمام

THURSDAY

TIME	١٩٩٧/١١/١٣ جدول ندوات المعرض
12:00-1:00	الشركة العامة للحاسبات منتجات LEXMARK
3:30-4:30	دوراد أبو جهم شركة هان Software Industry in JORDAN
5:00-6:00	جواد المغنبي للتنمية الدولية للإستشارات Baan Products
6:30-7:30	خالد خصونة - حازم جبارة مجموعة منتجات لنظم المعلومات Byte Archiving Solution

يوم الجمعة الموافق ١٤/١١/٩٧ دوام المعرض من الساعة ٩ إلى ٥ مساءً

جميع المحاضرات في قاعة العرض والدعوة عامة.

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IT'S AN EYE OPENER! INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS



Middle East Technology Show
معرض الشرق الأوسط للتكنولوجيا

NOVEMBER 13-16, 1997

AT THE AMMAN INTERNATIONAL FAIR HALL
MARJ AL-HAMAM - AMMAN - JORDAN
Organized by: Jordan Computer Society

استعداداً من ١٣-١٦ تشرين الثاني في معرض عمان الدولي - مرج الحمام
يفتح المعرض يومياً من الساعة ٩ صباحاً وحتى الساعة ٥ مساءً
للواحة - آلات - مؤسسة من وإلى المعرض

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حامل هذا الكوبون سوف يجد جائزة بانتظاره عند مدخل المعرض

الاسم
مكان العمل
الهاتف
تلفون

Interactive Media in the Middle East Technology enthusiasts in the ME, be ready Technologies that realize your dreams

By Jabra Ghneim

Special to The Star
THE INFORMATION technology sector in the Middle East is certainly moving towards interactive digital content. Of course, the medium through which this content will be transferred and handled is none other than the Internet.

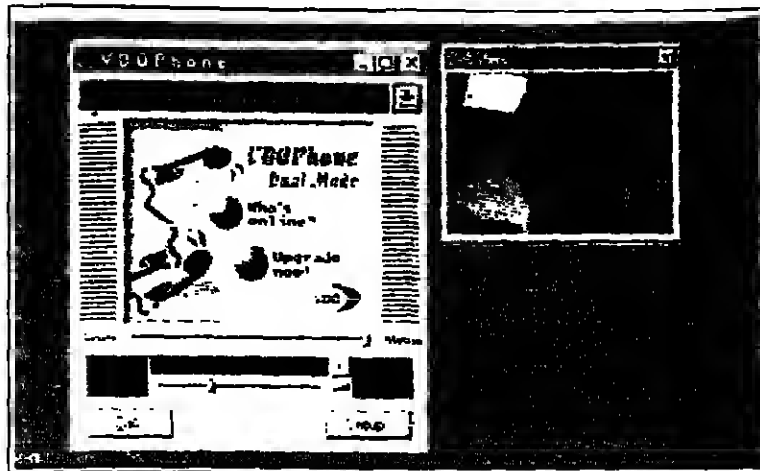
Interactive digital content includes data, voice, and video. Networking companies throughout the world, and their agents throughout the region are promoting new networking solutions which will provide the bandwidth necessary to handle this kind of content. Solutions include satellite broadcasting, NetTV boxes that are able to handle both digital content and legacy TV broadcasting; add to all this a system called SurfBox which hooks a TV set to a 33.6 Kbps modem and allows users to surf the net and send e-mail. These solutions hold a great promise for users everywhere. Things like Internet commerce and home-banking via the Internet become a reality. Or, even better, distant learning. Companies throughout the world and their agents throughout the region are promoting impressive networking solutions and technologies, such as ATM, ISDN, or IP switching, which allow for sending voice, video, and data over the same lines at very high speeds, very reliably. All of these high bandwidth technologies and gadgets are designed to transfer video and data simultaneously. Some call the combination video on demand.

Companies like Oracle and Microsoft toyed with the idea even before the first Internet browser was made. So, when the current Internet technologies made their debut, these companies adopted their technologies to fit with Internet technologies. Everybody will benefit greatly from these technologies. For home users, access to information on this super information highway will be easier and more accessible.

The immediate effect I think will be an acceleration of knowledge transfer. Students don't have to travel to learning centers around the world. All that a student has to do is have access to a satellite dish, a computer (or even a TV set) and the box (e.g. the modem), to access

a classroom at Harvard or Yale.

This student would attend the class, get his homework and submit, via the Internet, any work he has done. I imagine group study via the Internet will be fun too. At the moment students, or previous students who wish to improve their learning can hook up with any university site and download course material. These developments will help greatly in bridging the knowledge gap between nations and will make high quality education available to all. The result will be a redistribution of knowledge and wealth at levels not seen since the beginning of the world. From what I've seen so far this year, these developments are not only around the corner but



they are already here. At the business or corporate level the most immediate result will be an increase in productivity and competitiveness. Companies with international headquarters will be able to train or supervise their operations worldwide with just one conference call. Video conferencing has been available for a while, but it was

very expensive to all but the largest multinationals. The low cost and availability of the technology currently makes it easy for medium sized and small companies everywhere to expand their operations internationally. For workers, going to office won't be necessary at all. It is the age of the virtual office. One of the greatest effects of

these technologies will be reduced unemployment among skilled labor.

If no work is available in your town or even your country you can find one of the many jobs available in the international market without leaving your home. And the list goes on and on. The benefits are endless. One of the most important benefits though is that it will be harder for governments to fight or sponsor Internet content, or any kind of digital content, especially that it will most likely be broadcast through satellites to home TV sets. This will be a challenge to many governments in the Middle East. I am not sure that they can handle it or restrict it. Multinational companies promoting these technologies plan to go into all of the above.

Deals with regional content providers are underway. And cyberpunks in the region are ready and set to go.

email: GhneimJ@go.com.jo

Firstnet enters the Internet market with strong backing

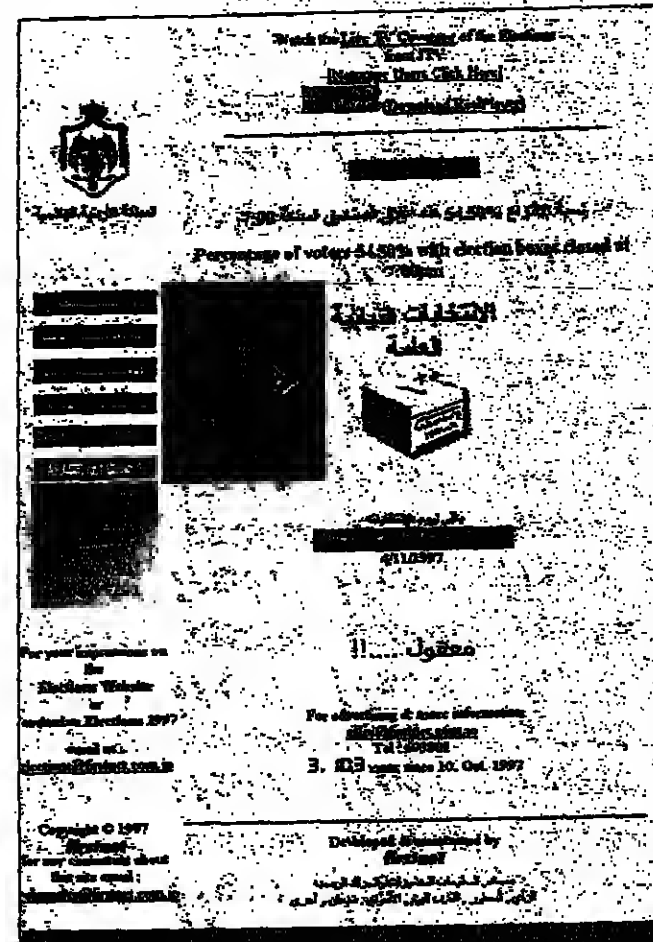
JORDAN'S INTERNET market is heating up, with a fourth Internet Service Provider which officially launches its services on November 17, 1997.

Firstnet was established by a group of leading financial & investment institutions and is the AT&T Internet Solution Partner.

The company's mission in Jordan is to support businesses professionally by providing quality Internet Turkey Solutions including Value Added Services.

Firstnet also aims to make the Internet an integral, useful part of the local community by providing simple, reliable and affordable access to the wealth of local and international resources available on the worldwide information superhighway.

The company is offering a high quality connection to the Internet which is guaranteed through a high quality, trouble free and customized solution. A connection is tailored so as to provide access for single access points, to a multi-user



network, allowing each user access with his/her own name and password.

Also, services offered include Web site development and hosting of customer requirements. Objectives are analyzed in order to plan, design and implement 'Custom Web Sites' that suits different needs, whether by opening up new marketing channels, publishing information electronically, and other services aimed at providing customers with self service facilities, self-support facilities and on-line interaction.

As part of Firstnet's commitment to security, the company delivers a high performance and secure Internet firewall service.

A firewall between the Internet and the customer network ensures secure transfer of information, preventing sensitive data from being accessed via the Internet by any unauthorized users and eliminating the threat of information abuse.

Value added services are an important component of Firstnet's strategy in attracting customers, however the company

will also apply a very competitive pricing policy especially for single users.

This is part of Firstnet's pricing policy based on the concept of a package that caters to every budget and need.

Currently, in the corporate market, Firstnet is finalizing several installations of leased lines in medium and large size local companies and organizations.

Firstnet has the expertise to make the Internet work for the Jordanian user, whether for education, business or entertainment purposes.

Among the distinguishing features that Firstnet's service enjoys are: Firstnet enjoys distinctive advantages that include backing of leading financial institutions, who are founders in the company, Partnership with AT&T, the world leader in communications, and value added services and a professional team encompassing Jordanian pioneers in networking infrastructure and the Internet.

Affordable American top quality Everex eXplora series

ARABIAN OFFICE Automation is one of the leading computer and information technology companies in Jordan.

The company distributes Everex PCs, Xerox photocopiers and printers, Atari and many more top brands.

Recently, the Everex brand has been performing very well

in the Jordanian market, mainly due to the fact that it is an American PC brand of very high quality and is offered at competitive prices.

Leading organizations in Jordan's public and private sectors have selected Everex for their computer solutions. Examples include The Prime Ministry, Ministry of Planning, University of Jordan, the Royal Scientific Society, Yarmouk University, Aqaba Port Authority and many more.

The Everex eXplora series of PCs received excellent reviews and commentary in the specialized computer press. In fact, it was found to outperform similarly configured systems from the like of Hewlett-Packard and Compaq. It has received awards as a 'high performance/ budget desktop system', and is based on the AMD K5 processor, which is an enhanced MMX processor that out-performs

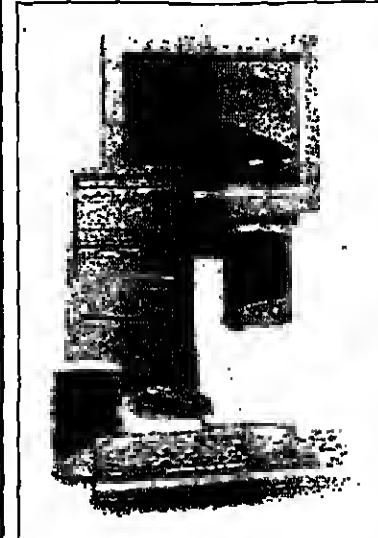
many Pentium models.

The Everex eXplora 995's ease-of-use makes it the perfect, complete system for home, small office and classroom computing. And, you can rest easy knowing you're protected with a 30-day money back guarantee, a one-year limited warranty.

Among the variety of Everex computers offered by Arabian Office Automation (AOA), there's an eXplora Pentium 233MMX system, or a Step Premier Pentium system that offers performance up to 266 MMX or dual processor systems delivering Pentium processors of speeds 300MHz. Pentium Pro systems are also offered, with 200 MHz processors.

Also, there are quad-speed systems from Everex with four processors on one motherboard.

Everex computers have delivered quality to users since 1983. Today, as technology needs develop, Everex continues to be at the forefront.



ArabWeb Chosen by Microsoft as the Default Arab Web Search Engine on IE

ArabWeb is a leading Internet search engine in the Arab world, and has been chosen by Microsoft as the default Arab Web search engine on Internet Explorer (IE).

ArabWeb search engine is a comprehensive, easy-to-use, and fast search engine that provides a wide range of search capabilities, including keyword, phrase, and domain name searches.

ArabWeb also offers a variety of advanced search features, such as the ability to search for specific file types, and to filter results by date, location, and other criteria.

Once the search results are displayed, users can click on any of the links to visit the web site, or to download files, or to view images.

ArabWeb is a free service, and is available to all users of the Internet. It is a valuable resource for anyone looking for information in the Arab world, and is a great way to stay up-to-date on the latest news and events.

ArabWeb is a leading Internet search engine in the Arab world, and has been chosen by Microsoft as the default Arab Web search engine on Internet Explorer (IE).

firstnet & AT&T

the perfect fit for perfect internet solutions

FirstNet was established by a group of leading financial & investment institutions* in Jordan, in cooperation with AT&T, to provide quality Internet Turkey Solutions.

Because we know that it takes more than just big institutions to make an excellent service provider, FirstNet's qualified personnel have all undergone advanced training to meet AT&T's international standards.

Our services will be available on November 17th to provide your business with the solutions you've always needed. Better yet, you will find that even though we are a partnership of some of the largest international and regional institutions, at the end of the day, we are friendly people who are here to serve you.

Some AT&T facts

- Runs the world's largest, most sophisticated communications network.
- Carries more than 200 million voice, data, video & fax messages every business day.
- Serves more than 90 million consumer, business and government customers.
- Has Annual revenues of more than \$ 53 billion and more than 130,000 employees.

For more information:
Tel: 693801 Fax: 605291
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* Arab Bank, Housing Bank, Bank of Jordan, Jordan & Gulf Bank, Arab Jordan Investment Bank, Arab Banking Corporation, Arab East Investment Company and others

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The new Arabia. On.Line catapults regional Web publishing to new heights: Quantum leap for Arab online media

THE FIRST and foremost destination for Arab world news, business, and culture on the Internet, is now online with a totally new, remodeled and upgraded service.

Arabia.On.Line 3.0 is not merely a facelift or rehashing of content. It is the real materialization of the vision for a premium Arab-world media.

The new Arabia.On.Line introduces original and exclusive content created by a team of unique editors, designers and programmers, supported by a visionary sales and marketing team.

The new Arabia.On.Line further supports push technology in the form of an active desktop channel available through Internet Explorer 4.0. To obtain this service, users can download IE4.0 and select their geographic location in the Middle East.

Arabia.On.Line will then become automatically available as an active desktop channel.

The network's content has also been streamlined into six channels, providing focus and making information access fast and easy. New channels are News (<http://arabia.com/news>), Business (<http://arabia.com/business>), Tech (<http://arabia.com/tech>), Living (com-



business health, tourism and entertainment at <http://arabia.com/living>). Culture (<http://arabia.com/culture>) and Community (includes Chat and Forums at <http://arabia.com/cmc>).

Business inside and outside the Arab world have much to gain from the new setup. Arabia.On.Line presents advertising and sponsorship opportunities to reach out to more than 2 million weekly viewers. Electronic publishing and commercial opportunities are available for publishers, services, and goods providers with the potential of opening new horizons.

A number of new services that make Arabia.On.Line a unique all-in-one interactive media include the following: ArabiaWeb (<http://arabiaweb.com>) is a directory of reviewed and classified sites on the Arab world.

A free Classifieds (<http://arabia.com/classifieds>) service helps you locate jobs and post ads according to region and category. A search function is available to exempt you from the tedious job of scrolling through piles of posts.

Complementing Arabia.On.Line's range of free ser-

vices is Bigfoot Arabia (<http://arabia.bigfoot.com>). You can now acquire your own free Web-based email that will stay with you wherever you go. It further allows you to route up to five email addresses to your Bigfoot email address.

The Chat (www.arabia.com/chat.htm) and Forum (www.arabia.com/cafes) index3.shtml zones provide users with further interactive abilities to exchange ideas and voice opinions.

Arabia.On.Line is the largest pan-Arab information network covering news, business and culture. A host of services including Bigfoot Arabia, a classifieds section as well as an Arab World Web Directory (ArabiaWeb) complement the company's services.

The company has been online since November 1995 and has since expanded to encompass many Arab countries in its member networks, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan and others. The company is also specialized in high-end Web development. Its customers include Dallah Al Barak, the Arab Bank, Arab Radio and Television (ART) among others.

Providing an Internet Ramp-On service with its well-known BBS:

NETS goes global

NATIONAL EQUIPMENT & Technical Services (NETS) pioneered the Bulletin Board Service concept in Jordan as early as 1994. At the time, it was the first on-line service that Jordanians experienced and the service took off, especially as it offered email forwarding and reception facilities.

The electronic conferences on NETS generated a massive wave of discussions, exchanges of views and opinions and much more. All in all, NETS has been a defining factor in Jordan's on-line landscape for well over three years.

Having obtained an Internet Service Provider (ISP) license, NETS started work to introduce a full Internet on-line service. By the middle of this year, the service was up and running.

Today, NETS offers a comprehensive bouquet of Internet and on-line services; all at very attractive prices, supported by top levels of service and quality.

What makes NETS so unique, when compared to other Internet Service Providers

is that the company has managed to create a 'bridge' or 'ramp-on' between its BBS and Internet On-Line services.

Through massive programming efforts, and a lot of utilization of Jordanian skill, NETS managed to apply the 'ramp-on' concept, technically putting its service on par with worldwide services like America On Line; who also offer subscribers a package comprising the BBS and the option to log into the Internet. In fact, the main attraction to most users is the BBS. The sheer interaction and number of users on-line is impressive.

Specialized conferences like 'Ask the Government' enable NETS subscribers to ask officials all sorts of questions and receive answers on-line. That's not all, JTV staff are also on-line to answer any queries regarding programming. These are just samples of the interactive conferences NETS has championed.

Currently, NETS is positioning itself as 'The Site for Jordanians Everywhere' which is an



exciting concept, which NETS is very capable of achieving. For starters, logging into the NETS site on the World Wide Web allows Jordanians abroad to enter the BBS and check out what's going on. What's more, users from abroad can conduct chats with local users! All this is achieved at a local call charge on both sides!

There is actually little or no time delay in such chats

Without a doubt, NETS is playing its part in connecting Jordanians from around the world. Getting back to the Internet service offered by NETS, the company offers a number of plans for subscribers. There's the Internet Plan which delivers 16 hours on the Internet for JD 16. The more hours you use, the lower the price per hour. In fact, if you pay JD 95, you can receive unlimited access on the Internet for a whole month. Just imagine, if you are willing to spend the whole day logged in, every day of the month, you can for under a JD 100.

Of course, the NETS pricing plans change and develop continuously, and its worth reviewing a comprehensive, updated offer from NETS, especially during the days of the exhibition when there's bound to be a special offer. Then, there's the NETS On-Line plan that offers subscribers full access to the NETS BBS, complete with all the services mentioned above.

Also, users can 'ramp-on' to the Internet at any time while on NETS, paying for as many hours as they use at the rate of JD 1 and 600 Fils an hour. This pay-per-use scheme is unique to NETS.

Of course, the NETS site also includes a lot of valuable general information on the country and presents a 'shining' example of Jordanian technology to the outside world. For more information, contact NETS at telephone 5510101 or check out the NETS web site at www.nets.com.jo.

CeBIT

The world's biggest business fair for office automation

NOW, MORE than before, companies have to tailor their development, production, sales and administration processes to market requirements and customer needs. This task would be impossible without advanced information and telecommunications technology. It is a matter of finding the best solutions in the shortest possible time—and of keeping pace with the rapid speed of development in the IT sector.

CeBIT '98 will present visitors with an all-embracing line-up of office equipment, information technology, telecoms technology and software. As the world's largest information forum for professional users, CeBIT '98 is the ideal opportunity to identify leading-edge solutions and plan far-reaching investment decisions.

It's no coincidence that CeBIT is the place where industry leaders from all over the globe come together to do business. In the coming year 7,000 exhibitors from 60 countries, including Jordan, will provide an unmatched insight into the latest applications and market trends. CeBIT is the chance to respond successfully to the challenges of the global marketplace.

Innovative IT and telecommunications are exerting a determining influence on day-to-day operation throughout industry, commerce and the public sector. Network computing, office automation, Internet, intranet, mobile communication, multimedia, virtual reality, on-line services—these will be key issues in the coming years. CeBIT '98 offers an ideal opportunity to stay ahead in the information race. The world's biggest showplace for product innovations, only CeBIT gives

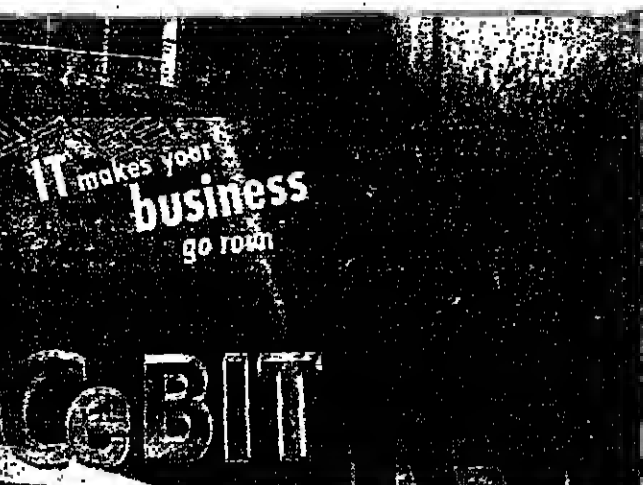
visitors a complete update on the latest products, systems and services.

CeBIT '98 will unite the entire IT world under a single umbrella. In all the central product categories—office automation, information technology, telecommunications, applications software, services—CeBIT is the undisputed international market leader.

This unique concentration of technology and trends can exert a crucial influence on visitors' corporate performance. CeBIT is their chance to establish important contacts, to find effective answers to central questions and to identify the key business solutions they have long been searching for.

Range of Exhibits:

1. Information Technology & Hardware: Over 1,500 exhibitors will bring together the world's biggest line-up of information technology and hardware.
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3. CIM/ADC: Over 700 exhibitors will provide an unrivaled insight into computer-aided manufacturing technologies and automatic data acquisition. Visitors will also be able to assess the potential synergies of combining CIM systems, network computing and telecommunications systems.



4. Software: Over 2,300 exhibitors will present a complete international range of operating and applications software. CeBIT will also provide a central forum for 400 specialist service providers working in all areas of IT and telecommunications. Visitors thus have every chance of finding competent outside partners suited to their specific business requirements.
5. Telecommunications: Over 900 exhibitors, leading telecoms experts from all sectors, will present the world's largest display of innovative communications technology.
6. Office Automation: Over 200 exhibitors will provide an unmatched insight into high-tech office systems and the potential they offer for boosting efficiency and productivity.
7. Bank Technology: Over 200 exhibitors will present a complete range of hardware & software targeted at the financial services industry. This will be

backed up by a varied program of special displays, forums, discussions and guided tours. An unbeatable source of ideas and information that you bank on—in every sense!

8. Security equipment/card technology: Over 200 exhibitors will showcase the latest developments and trends in security equipment and plastic and magnetic card systems.
9. Research & technology transfer: Over 250 exhibitors representing universities, research establishments and industries will provide a fascinating preview of tomorrow's technologies. Top priority will be given to fostering an intensive dialogue between science and business.

For further information and assistance regarding CeBIT '98, please contact now HAN-VERMEER representative in Jordan: Mr. Khaled Tilawi, at telephone 778952 or fax 777682.

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Whether it's Jerusalem or Nantucket, you can't go home again

By Dr Alfred M. Lilienthal

THIRTY MILES out into the Atlantic lies my personal Tara, the "little, old gray lady," as the island of Nantucket is more familiarly known to long-time inhabitants. Last year, 1996, was the only time in 50 years that I had not at least touched base there.

It was on the island, in 22 different houses, that I found the serenity and beauty that helped inspire me to write four books on the Middle East conflict and innumerable articles for *Middle East Perspective*, the monthly newsletter, I published-edited for 17 years.

At the same time I managed to keep in fairly good shape through daily bicycling which took me to the beach in the late afternoon after early rising to write. I took the bike to social events as well, including a wedding for which I gathered a bouquet of wild flowers in the woods to give to the bride.

Long ago, I gave my bicycle a special name, "B.G." What did it stand for? It was named after Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion because I loved to ride it so much.

In late July of 1997 I was back on the island again and, as usual, tried to keep abreast of the outside world through *The New York Times*. Its 30 July issue, which I picked up at the Hub on Main Street, carried in glaring headlines (as did its sister paper, *The Boston Globe*), the story of the Palestinian suicide bombing that had shattered a crowded Jerusalem market, killing or fatally injuring 16 people and wounding a score more.

For two days, the times were filled with coverage of the attack, which it claimed editorially had severely endangered "the peace process." (More appropriately, the "surrender process"). The ravages of this and past acts of terrorism were listed by date and sprinkled out in great detail. Neither in these listings nor anywhere else, however, was there even the barest mention of the massacre in Hebron's Ibrahimi mosque in which American-born Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein shot and killed 29 Palestinian men and boys as they prayed in Hebron's Ibrahimi mosque; the opening of the Hasmonaean tunnel near the foundations of the Al Aqsa mosque in East Jerusalem; the start of the "Har Homa" settlement for Jews only at Jabal Abu Ghneim and other Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem; the closure of Gaza and the West Bank depriving thousands of Palestinians access to their jobs in Israel; nor of the other multi-fold acts of oppression by Israel.

In sum, there was no real cause to effect—only the incessant use of the pejorative "terrorist" to stultify reasoning in the same manner as the other widely used labels, "anti-Semite" and "anti-Semitism." But I been used to stifle criticism or even

mention of acts of terrorism by the Israeli army or Israeli settlers.

Starting on its front page with a horrific photo from the scene of the West Jerusalem bombing, the *Times* built paths through pictures of victims, and grieving family members. By contrast, when Palestinians are shot, or tortured and sometimes fatally injured by Israeli police and interrogators, or are expelled from bulldozed homes, they scarcely are photographed. (And, if such stories are reported at all, they appear in the smallest possible space in the back pages of the paper).

It was reported in this same issue of the *Times* that US representative Dennis Ross would shortly be sent back to the region to continue "US mediating efforts." It is axiomatic that mediation requires objectivity and impartiality. Yet, Ross, his deputy, Aaron David Miller, US Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk (who is soon to be assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs), and State Department spokesman James Rubin all just happen to be Jewish, as are the head of the National Security Council, Samuel Berger, and his deputy, James Steinberg, the top two foreign policy makers in the White House.

Whatever the individual predilections of these policymakers, it is simply ridiculous that all American officials involved with US mediation in Middle East peace are Jewish, but this has never even been reported, much less questioned editorially, by *The New York Times*, America's "newspaper of record."

What a far cry this is from September 1960, when, in a personal letter to me, presidential candidate John F. Kennedy wrote, "I wholly agree that American partisanship in the Arab-Israeli conflict is dangerous both to the United States and the free world. My goal is to bring the parties to the negotiating table."

Such was my random thoughts as I sat reading my *Times* on the bench in front of the Hub—in the very spot where I had sat 45 years earlier exchanging views with President Roosevelt's former personal envoy, Morris Ernst. The famed civil rights attorney had been sent by the president to England early in World War II to see whether the British (and other British Commonwealth nations) would join the US in opening their doors to a goodly number of European refugees. England expressed a willingness to take in 150,000 to 200,000 Jewish refugees, provided the US would match that number.

Ernst was shocked when, upon his return, he was told by the president that this program of rescue "could not be put over because the dominant vocal Jewish leadership of America won't stand for it."

When Ernst asked why, the president replied, "They know they can raise vast sums for Palestine by saying to their donors, 'There is no other place this poor Jew



Dr Lilienthal pictured with orphans in a PLO-run school in 1984

can go." But if there is world political asylum for all people, they cannot raise the money. Then, the people who do not want to give the money will have an excuse to say, 'What do you mean, there is no place they can go but Palestine?' They are the preferred wards of the world."

This alleged response by the Zionist leadership ended the remarkable FDR effort to rescue Europe's displaced persons.

When we spoke, Ernst agreed that the policy the US was pursuing in the Middle East was in no way serving the American national interest but rather was calculated only to woo votes and campaign funds for the incumbent administration. However, in the aftermath of his efforts, he became reluctant to speak out boldly in criticism and thus find himself trashed by the White House.

Ernst's reluctance recalled for me vividly the failure of my own lobbying efforts at the UN to block the original Zionist aggression against Palestine. I had been there working for the American Council for Judaism, the anti-Zionist group formed by concerned Jews which exists to this day.

On 29 November, 1947, however, the international organization voted 33 to 13 at its Lake Success headquarters to partition the Mandate of Palestine into two states,

Although Jews comprised only one-third of the population at the time, the Jewish state that became Israel received some 53 percent of the land. The two-thirds of the population who were Muslim and Christian Arabs received some 47 per cent of the land, but the Arab Palestinian state never came into being. A mere shift of three votes would have stalled the new US-Zionist alliance. (My unsuccessful efforts are all detailed in my 1954 book, *What Price Israel?*)

It was in the wake of the defeat that I first came to Nantucket to lick my wounds by writing an extended article, "Israel's Flag Is Not Mine," which was followed in subsequent summers by the books, *What Price Israel?*, *The Other Side of the Coin*, *There Goes the Middle East*, and, finally, *The Zionist Connection I and II*.

I do not believe that I could have achieved even the most modest summer writings goals had the island earlier been invaded by hordes of tourists—all wearing "Nantucket"-emblazoned T-shirts purchased in the local stores. Neither the ancient cobblestoned Main Street nor the winding, narrow side streets were ever made for the vehicles, vans and large "U-Haul" trucks which now pervade the island. Roads to the beaches are clogged by

bumper-to-bumper traffic, and the lives of the bicyclists no little endangered. Worse, the island's serenity has been greatly diluted.

Palestine, likewise, has been drastically changed by an overwhelming influx of outsiders—initially by those seeking a haven from Nazi genocide and then by Zionist nation-builders. In 1917, at the time of the Balfour Declaration, the indigenous Arab population constituted 93 percent of the inhabitants. Although that overwhelming majority had shrunk to 68 percent at the time of the 1947 partition, surprisingly, despite the forcible eviction of close to a million Palestinians in 1948 and in 1967, Christian and Muslim Palestinians still constitute about half of the population in the former Mandate of Palestine (including both those in the Occupied Territories and inside Israel), and may already outnumber the Jewish inhabitants. This helps to explain the daily encroachment by the state of Israel on Palestinian land and lives. Evictions, bulldozing and closures have become very much the order of the day.

In holding Israel out as the worldwide Jewish state instead of, as initially designed by the UN, a small refuge state, Zionist propagandists have been able to take full advantage of global repugnance to

Nazism and sympathy for its victims. With the help of a most compliant media and of venal politicians, the incessant recital of the Holocaust in every possible form most effectively continue to inflame the world's conscience. This has most recently been exemplified by the saga of the Swiss bank accounts. Indeed, the Holocaust and the ensuing guilt both make cowards of us all!

During my recent visit to one of Nantucket's beaches, I spied the tall, lean figure of the Rt. Reverend Krister Stendahl. For many years he had been the bishop of Stockholm, presiding over the coronation of Swedish rulers. The bishop had been my landlord during two of my Nantucket summers when I occupied his charming flower-laden cottage on Denmore Road. At the end of my stay, as a token of my appreciation, I left behind an autographed copy of *The Zionist Connection II* which had been published earlier that year. In a note of thanks, the bishop wrote, "I have not yet read the volume you so kindly left me. But I do trust that your book is not another anti-Semitic polemic against Israel and Zionism."

Despite the close connection to Swedish kings, one of whose nephews, Count Folke Bernadotte, had been assassinated in 1948 by Yitzhak Shamir's Lehi (Stern Gang) militia in the course of carrying out his duties as UN conciliator in the Holy Land, this Swedish church official could not conceive of any person, let alone a Jewish American, publicly questioning the justice of the Zionist takeover of the Holy Land.

This year, on the Sunday before leaving the island, I attended services in its unique old Unitarian church. It was in this same edifice in mid-August 1971 that I had faced a most unsympathetic audience which had come to hear me speak on the topic, "How Can We Stop the Middle East from Becoming Another Vietnam?"

From the outset of that evening, I found it most difficult to defuse the obvious hostility of the audience. It seemed almost as if the church were overflowing with Zionists specifically flown in from Boston and its environs to heckle me. Nevertheless, with the grace of the good Lord, I managed to deliver my remarks and then answer the volley of angry, negative questions thrown at me.

As I finish this narrative, I cannot help speculating over which task is most difficult, restoring the original serenity of my lovely island of Nantucket, or bringing peace and justice to the Holy Land. Both goals would require Herculean efforts. As Thomas Wolfe expressed it, "You Can't Go Home Again."

Dr Alfred M. Lilienthal is the author of *What Price Israel? The Other Side of the Coin*, *There Goes the Middle East*, and *The Zionist Connection*.

Howls signal massacre in Algiers' 'triangle of death'

By John Daniszewski

SIDI-RAIS, Algeria—Ahmed Aitar did what any man could. When he heard the terrorists of the Armed Islamic Group coming to his district, howling like wolves in the middle of the night, the 58-year-old driver let panicked neighbors take shelter in his three-story brick house, one of the tallest on the block.

Two hours later, when the attackers arrived in the street, he fought them with stones and bricks from his front yard. When they were breaking through the metal gate around his yard, he ran to the back and saved himself by climbing the wall of his house to a second-story window.

But by now, the attackers had blown open all doors and were starting to kill whomever they could find. Amid the chaos, curses and screams, Aitar managed to lead most of his neighbors, including one badly wounded woman, onto his flat concrete roof for a last stand.

Their ordeal was to last four hours. When it was finished, 45 of 110 people in the home were dead, including his wife, son and daughter and the wounded woman who had dragged herself onto his roof. Bodies of children were piled in the street.

Retelling his story last week, Aitar collapsed and wept. "Why did it happen?" he sobbed. "Why me? Why did they come to my house?"

The struggle between the Algerian government and its opponents has taken many forms for six years now. Since early 1992, when the military moved to stamp out an Islamic movement that was about to win power via elections, there have been assassinations of government officials, journalists, foreigners and intellectuals.

Thousands of women have been abducted and raped. Bombs, torture, disappearances, murders at false police roadblocks—all of these horrors have blended into a reign of terror in which human

rights experts say, neither side is blameless.

But none of these atrocities of Algeria's dirty war have matched the extremists' latest tactic: the massacres of scores, sometimes hundreds, of innocent civilians, at night, in their homes, mainly in an area just south of the capital that has become known as the "Triangle of Death."

There, old men and babies, pregnant women and children, have been ruthlessly slain with no discernible pattern or motive. The killers have targeted not individuals but whole communities. Death comes in close, gory fashion—slit necks, decapitation, victims hurled alive. These means spread maximum fear.

Because security forces usually arrive late, or not at all, there have been wide suspicions that "le pouvoir"—the power—the government—somehow has a complicity in the killings. But in the absence of evidence, Western diplomats and most Algerians admit that they simply are baffled by the ghastly incidents.

The two largest massacres were in Sidi-Rais and Benthalha, drah bedroom suburbs of Algiers, where solid brick houses shelter working-class Algerians, large families spanning several generations who are caught amid a nightmare.

In Sidi-Rais, unofficial sources say, as many as 500 people were murdered on 28 August and more than 200 at Benthalha on 23 September. The government tolls are lower: 180 dead at Sidi-Rais and 100 at Benthalha.

Why these areas, which supported the banned Islamic Salvation Front in the last election, were targeted is as murky as the Algerian conflict. Some residents saw it as punishment for withholding support from the insurgents. Others think the regime or its supporters took reprisal against those who had been too supportive of the opposition. To others, the communities were simply vulner-

able; massacres embarrass the regime.

One Sidi-Rais survivor emphasized just how methodical the killers were. From his hiding place, he could hear them encouraging each other. "Please do your job slowly. Don't hurry," he heard one terrorist say. And the victims? "Of course they were begging. 'Don't kill me! Tell me what I've done,'" he recalled.

Aitar, the driver, was in bed on a Tuesday night when he heard the howls shortly after 11:30 p.m. Other witnesses said the attackers had arrived in small groups and surrounded two Benthalha neighborhoods, preventing escape. Their howls were followed by gunshots and screams.

It was not until 1 a.m. that the assault started at Aitar's home. After he and 65 or so others had made it to the roof, they burned clothing and gasoline on the concrete steps to keep a barrier between themselves and the killers.

When the attackers tried to clamber up, they were forced back by a barrage of bricks, stones and metal rods. They fired at the crowd with Kalashnikov rifles, but the twisting structure of the stairs spared those on the roof for a time.

But down below, a slaughter was under way. The attackers cut off a room filled with children and mothers. They hurled 10 youngsters to the street from a third-floor window; others—wielding knives, axes and machetes—slit the throats of the injured, including a 1-year-old.

Some victims fell in place, including Aitar's wife of 35 years; she was gunned down in the kitchen. His son, 24, and daughter, 19, were mowed down, the tell-tale bloody signs of their fate left on smoke-blackened walls.

The marauders, who already had stolen money from the house and stripped jewelry from corpses, departed with a final insult, dousing gasoline

all around and igniting what would become a bonfire of Aitar's home. That blaze alerted firefighters—who eventually rescued Aitar and his neighbors from the roof redoubt.

Still, during the evening of nightmarish bloodletting, no police or soldiers ever came to the scene—although a large army garrison was only 800 yards away and some town residents had fled toward it.

Various explanations have been advanced for the feeble response at Benthalha and Sidi-Rais: The young military recruits may have wanted to help but were afraid; terrorists may have laid mines before the attack to block rescuers; the troops simply had no orders to take action, and no leadership to do so.

Some residents said privately that they suspect collusion, an accusation that authorities have heatedly denied. "It was impossible" to help, said one gendarme, who used profanity to describe the "bloody" killers that Aitar described.

At his home, as he showed where he had hidden some children in case he fell victim and could not protect them, Aitar suddenly squatted and sobbed, tears gushing.

From a roof next door, neighbors watched in respectful silence, for they too knew just how furious this killing spree had been. On several homes on Aitar's block, doors are bent from grenade explosions; window frames are blackened by fires set in the rampage.

And at the end of the street, near a house belonging to Said Rabahe, who hid while witnessing the mayhem, is the site where 36 people were murdered. Rabahe said he saw the killers toss victims from the roof and slash their throats.

His own wife, daughter and son sought haven on the heights of a neighbor's roof. But they too were cast to the ground. He heard the sick-

ing thud of the bodies. His three family members survived this ordeal. But his wife was killed after she hit the ground.

His daughter, 18, is missing. Rabahe believes she was taken by the terrorists to be raped. "I think that she is dead. She would not have allowed them to touch her," he said.

His son, Boualati, was spared because he fell onto other bodies. Smeared in blood, he played dead for 90 terrible minutes and thus survived.

But he and the other survivors face new torments. They must grieve for their many dead, even as they are racked

by guilt and doubt. Could they have done something different in that flash, in that critical moment, and thus saved a child, a parent or a spouse?

Algeria's deeper tragedy, though, may be that none of these cases is so special anymore. With about 65,000 people killed since the struggle between the government and extremists began in 1992, there are few Algerians who have not attended the funeral of a relative or a friend. And, in the Triangle of Death last week, more bodies were found.

LA Times-Washington Post News Services

One survivor's tale of horror in Algeria

SIDI-RAIS, Algeria—The blood-soaked survivors of recent terrorist massacres in Algeria recount their experiences with stunned disbelief, as if narrating a film.

Take, for example, Nabil Amrouche, who relives an evening of agony as he makes his way during the daylight to the cemetery among rows and rows of mounds that cover the dead of Sidi-Rais and Benthalha. He and his wife took flight and survived that miserable night. But they were forced to leave their son Ahmed, 3, with his grandfather.

After hiding under a bush all night long with his 3-year-old son, Amrouche says, "Daddy, please, don't breathe—they'll hear you." Amrouche went to his father's room only to find him and his son dead on the doorstep. The father had been shot; Ahmed's throat had been slit. The boy's body lay in his grandfather's arms.

Amrouche is explicitly decided to demonstrate the crime. He grabbed his 3-year-old son roughly, turned his head and ran the edge of his hand across the side of his neck. Terror spread across the father's face for a moment.

Then Amrouche spoke, his voice thick with regret. "I don't know why we divided our children like that. It happened so quickly. I don't know why."

The emotion grew so thick that the interpreter translating his remarks could not go on.

LA Times-Washington Post News Services



Police encircle female students at Istanbul university who are protesting the university decision to make women take off the hijab while they are being photographed for their identity cards, last week.

13 NOVEMBER 1997

ENGLISH

SATURDAY

10:00—Holy Mass
10:30—Worship
11:00—Worship
11:30—World of
12:00—The 1st
12:30—Neighborhood
1:00—French Pro
1:30—News Line
2:00—Are you
2:30—Newly We
3:00—Prison
3:30—Time Trav
4:00—Feature
4:30—Election

SUNDAY

10:00—Holy Mass
10:30—Little K
11:00—Joey (J
11:30—The Mag
12:00—French Pro
12:30—Lucky I
1:00—American
1:30—French Pro
2:00—News in F
2:30—News Head
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The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 15-21 November

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

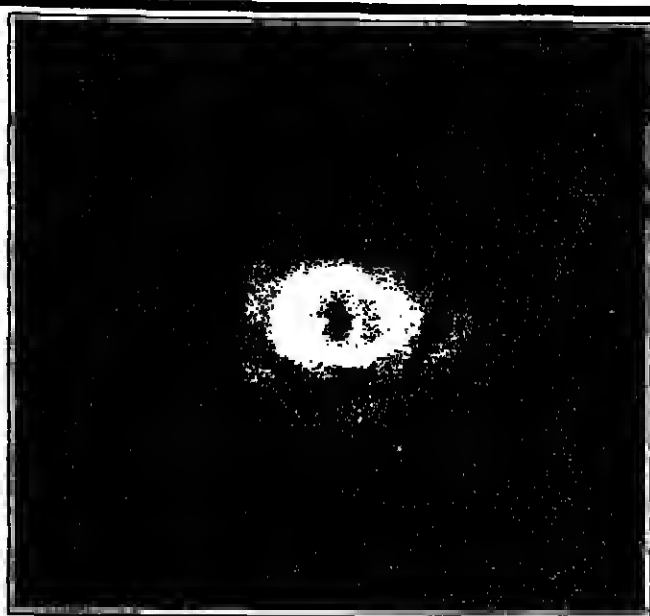
2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Twinkle
2:30—Muppet Show
3:00—Pumpkin Patch
3:15—World of Gen
4:00—The Valley Between
4:30—Neighbors
5:00—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Are you Being Served
8:00—Newly Weds
8:30—Prison
9:10—Time Trax
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film:
Awakenings
12:00—Ellen

SUNDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Little Rascals
2:30—Jonny Quest
2:50—The Magic School Bus
3:00—Energy Express
3:40—Lucky Luke
4:00—American Chart Show
4:30—Tarzan
6:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Fresh Prince of Bel Air
8:00—Cinema, Cinema,
Cinema
8:30—Hotshots
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—The Bourne Identity
11:15—Drama

MONDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Show With the
Mong
2:30—The Cowboy of the
Moon
3:00—Gillette Sports Special
3:15—Riding High
3:30—Animal Show
4:00—Oliver Twist
4:30—Neighbors



Cosmos documentary on space, Monday 11:15 pm

5:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Murphy Brown
8:00—The Health Show
8:30—Babylon 5
9:10—Highlander
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Emergency Room
11:15—Cosmos (Doc.)

TUESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Sandocan
2:30—C.R.O.
3:00—Skippy
3:30—The Album Show
4:30—Square One TV
5:15—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Skeleton Coast
8:30—Enconner
9:10—Hollywood Remembers
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Magaret Volant

WEDNESDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Jonny Quest
2:30—Super Danc
3:00—Secrets of Treasure
Island
3:30—Spell Binder
4:00—Munsters Today
4:10—Border Town
4:30—Neighbors
5:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—High Tech Culture
8:00—Some One Like Me
8:30—Challenges
9:10—Kung-Fu
10:00—News at Ten
10:25—Land's End
11:00—American Gothic

THURSDAY

2:00—Holy Koran



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 634149): *The Jaguar*
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 634149): *Pretty Woman*
- Plaza (Tel: 699238): *Double Team*
- Concord I (Tel: 677420): *Mr Bean*
- Concord II (Tel: 677420): *Sleep Walkers*
- Galleria I (Tel: 634149): *Hercules / Con Air*
- Galleria II (Tel: 634149): *Scream*

2:10—New Kids on the Block
2:30—My Little Fairy Tale
3:00—America's Funniest
People
3:30—He Shoot He Scores
4:00—National Geographic
4:30—The Boy from
Andromeda
5:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Trivial Pursuit
8:00—Parenthood
8:30—Lois and Clark
(Superman)
9:10— Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *I Spy
Returns*
12:00—Music Show

FRIDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Adventure of
Teddy Ruxp
2:30—Fred And Barney
3:00—Wish Bone
3:30—Lucky Luke
4:00—Family Matters
4:30—NBA
5:00—French Programs
7:00—News in French
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Life on the Internet
8:00—Are you Being Served
8:30—Adventures of Brisco
County
9:10—The History Makers
10:00—News at Ten
10:30—Best Seller
11:30—Daddy's Girls

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

5:00—Bêtes pas Bêtes
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Secrets de famille
6:00—Robert hondin
7:00—Le journal

7:15—Magazine
L'enfant de Colomb

DIMANCHE

5:00—Micro Kids
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Secrets de famille
6:00—Magazine
Faut pas rêver
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine pour tous
Zivo

LUNDI

5:00—Bêtes pas Bêtes
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Secrets de famille
6:00—Thalassa
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine scientifique
Cinq sur cinq

MARDI

5:00—Bêtes pas bêtes
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Secrets de famille
6:00—Savoir plus santé
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Orient sur Seine

MERCREDI

5:00—Micro kids
5:15—Regarde le monde
5:30—Secrets de famille
6:00—Ushuaia
7:00—Le journal
7:15—E-M6

JEUDI

5:00—L'invité de marque
5:30—Etonnant et drôle
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Le dessous des cartes

VENREDI

5:30—Madame la conseillère
7:00—Le journal
7:15—Magazine
Alla tu terre

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Movies & Videos

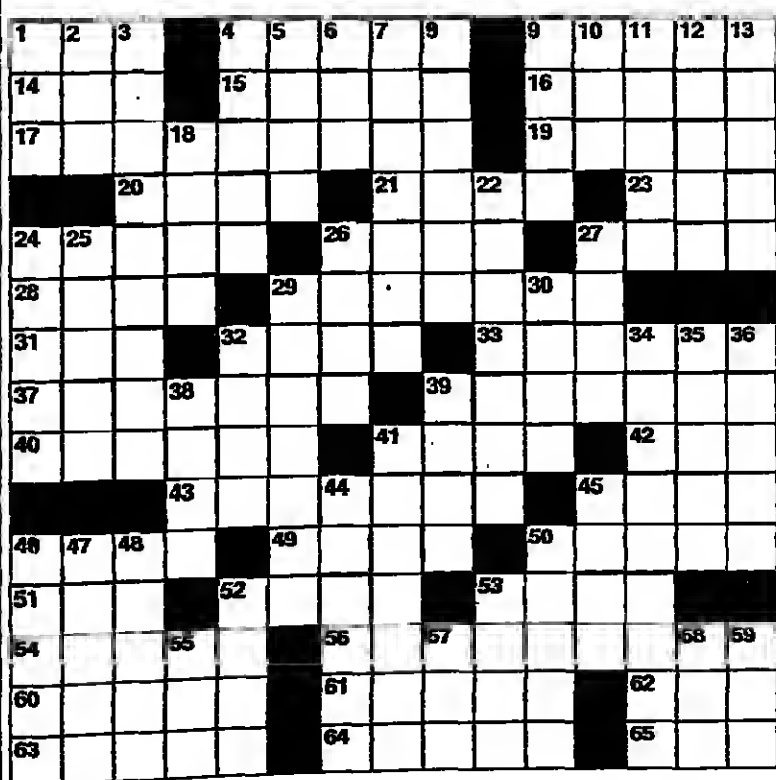


The Jackal

● The FBI's Deputy
Director (Sydney
Poitier) faces the
biggest challenge of
his career. In order
to track down this
cold-blooded killer,
he and Russian offi-
cer Valentina Kos-
lova (Diane Venora)
enlist the aid of an
imprisoned under-
ground operative
Declan Mulgeen
(Richard Gere).
Together these
unlikely allies enter
a global race against
the clock to stop the
Jackal (Bruce
Willis)...



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| ACROSS | 37 Nebraska city | DOWN | 30 Flying prefix |
| 1 Ewe's call | 39 Wonder | 1 Future flower | 32 Israeli dance |
| 4 Moves slightly | 40 Loud firework | 2 Soul: Fr. | 34 Odd |
| 9 Fake | 41 Circle of light | 3 Job seeker | 35 Lift up spirit |
| 14 Ref's relative | 42 Coolidge | 4 Worn out | 36 Takes it easy |
| 15 Courtyard | 43 Small fish | 5 Chore | 38 Courtroom
procedure |
| 16 Oriental nurses | 44 Bristle | 6 Pronoun | 41 Biblical
tribesman |
| 17 Tongue —
(wooden blade) | 45 Low down | 7 Being
disorderly | 44 Plays |
| 19 Famous | 49 Table scraps | 8 Most tender | 45 Catch |
| 20 Connection | 50 Add on | 9 Speedy | 46 Favored |
| 21 Try out | 51 Eng. course | 10 "I — Camera" | 47 One who points |
| 23 Before | 52 Small insect | 11 Puts on freight | 48 Oven |
| 24 Arm part | 53 Little pest | 12 Portion | 50 Stood up |
| 26 Succeed | 54 Act the ham | 13 Chemical
compound | 52 Man |
| 27 Addict | 56 Small measure | 18 Chance | 53 Joseph — (Tito) |
| 28 Euphemism | 60 Lucky number | 22 Submissive | 55 Social function |
| 29 Main | 61 Musketeer
name | 24 Puppy | 57 Greek letter |
| 31 Greek letter | 62 Once — blue
moon | 25 Bird again | 58 Literary
collection |
| 32 Secretary of
State | 63 Deal with | 27 Arm bone | 59 Wrestler's
milieu |
| 33 Gloss | 64 Take over | 29 Large kettle | |
| | 65 Grimacing | | |

★ ★ — THIS WEEK'S — ★ ★ HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The moon in Aquarius will help you ponder delicate mechanical and scientific intricacies.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Don't ignore an older person's instructions or you'll be in trouble. Get a friend to help you with your work. A sharp comment could cut deep, so watch your mouth.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Make your move early. You'll be stuck in a traffic jam soon. A friend comes to your rescue. You can return the favor — possibly leading to a romantic interlude.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Count your pennies so you'll know how much you can spend on travel. A field trip's a marvelous way to study. Cater to an older person's whims so you can go out with your friends later.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Confer with your partner and set the week's agenda. Money troubles could plague you unless you've planned ahead. Travel or study a foreign language — preferably in the company of a native.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). You and your mate can solve a massive problem, if you put your heads together. Financing's available — shop around for the best deal. Travel for athletic purposes.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Start the week with a breakfast date. Your workload's intense. There won't be time to play. Provide practical skills to help your mate achieve a lofty objective. Do what needs to be done — criticism won't help.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Don't take a hassle at home too seriously. Conversations could lead to romance, if you're interested. Concentrate on your work. Let friends drag you off on a wonderful adventure.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). This is a tough period. Relax with a cuddly, compassionate type. A soak in a hot tub's a good idea. If you can call in sick and stay home in bed, do that.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Write the rent check first, so you don't forget. A fascinating subject soaks up your attention. Be available for domestic consultation more than usual.

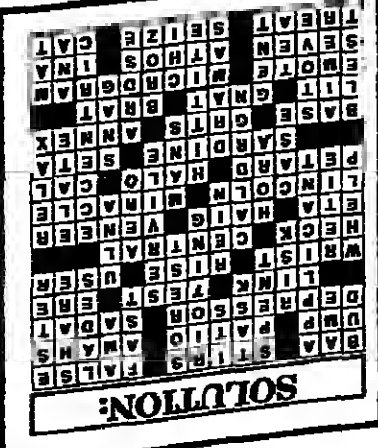
Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). If you need money, ask for it. Be really careful in stores that sell technical gadgets — you may decide you need one of each. Practice.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll get nagged pretty severely if you haven't done something you promised. You'll be back in control soon.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Heed an old friend's advice. You may find yourself in a bureaucratic mess. Take your time, and don't lose your cool.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: This is one of those dues-paying years. Don't gripe, you're building good skills. Get help you with the engineering, and you could build something really fabulous.

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Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Exposition La sacrée Bretagne de Cudennec

Les toiles colorées de Patrice Cudennec sont au Centre culturel français jusqu'au 20 novembre. Il peint la Bretagne et le bonheur. Rencontre avec un artiste sur le tard.

A 30 ans, Patrice Cudennec découvre soudain la peinture. Aujourd'hui, après plus de quinze ans de vie commune avec l'art, il se demande comment jusqu'ici il a pu faire sans. La peinture est devenue une nécessité quotidienne pour Patrice Cudennec.

Né en 1952 en Bretagne dans l'ouest de la France, il fait des études de psychologie et travaille comme instituteur jusqu'au jour où il décide de se consacrer à la peinture, à plein temps. Autodidacte et polyvalent, il pratique également la sculpture et la gravure. Mais c'est surtout la peinture qui lui fait vivre les moments de plénitude les plus intenses. «Quand je peins, je suis heureux», confesse-t-il avec une étonnante simplicité dans le regard d'habitude si neutre.

Appelée par certains «peinture du bonheur», ce que dessine Patrice Cudennec part d'une émotion très forte, presque primaire, pour en déclencher une autre, sublimée et grandiose : une méditation sereine devant un monde terrestre imprégné de sacré. Dans ses toiles, l'hérésie est ainsi cachée parmi les hommes, posée discrètement sur les visages peaux des pêcheurs prêts à prendre la mer, sur les mains des femmes-madones en costumes traditionnels bretons, ou



Les deux frères. «Mon thème principal, c'est l'humain», confie Patrice Cudennec, peintre du sacré.

sur les paupières closes des danseurs au printemps et des clowns au tambour... Sous ce souffle liturgique, les tableaux se transforment en vitraux. Les personnages aux costumes riches y resplendissent sur des arrière-plans plus simplifiés, quasi abstraits à force d'être saturés de couleurs et nous incitent à la rêverie.

Le détail décoratif n'est pas superflu dans les compositions de Cudennec. «La décoration

n'est pas forcément un trait péjoratif», insiste-t-il. Les ornements des costumes populaires, les motifs floraux des encadrements intérieurs des scènes de vie rappellent l'art des icônes et renforcent le sentiment du sacré.

L'artiste prétend que c'est d'abord l'humain qui l'intéresse. Les gestes qu'on est tenté, à raison, d'interpréter religieusement sont aussi une manière de «mettre les gens en relation» et d'exprimer «leur désir de communication», explique Patrice Cudennec. «Mon thème principal, c'est l'humain, poursuit-il, les larmes et les rires des clowns, c'est le spectacle de la vie» que l'artiste a décidé de peindre surtout en rouge.

Très attaché à la culture populaire de sa région natale et descendant spirituel de l'école de Pont-Aven, dans le droit fil de Gauguin et Sérusier, Patrice Cudennec n'est pourtant pas un régionaliste. Pour preuve, la facilité avec laquelle les contes populaires d'Amman se reconnaissent dans ses œuvres de Breton. Certains même ont cru y voir la Palestine, autre terre sacrée...

Anca de Maio

Un accord Vatican-Israël provoque la colère des Palestiniens

«L'Autorité palestinienne de Yasser Arafat a qualifié de «coup de poignard dans le dos» l'accord conclu entre le Vatican et Israël pour légaliser le statut de l'Eglise catholique en Terre Sainte. «C'est une affaire très dangereuse qui confère à Israël un droit de regard sur les lieux saints à Jérusalem, alors que le statut de la ville doit être déterminé dans les négociations», a déclaré Hassan Tahboub, le ministre palestinien des Affaires religieuses. Cet accord donne pour la première fois un statut légal, au regard de la loi israélienne, à l'Eglise catholique romaine et à ses institutions. Et c'est aussi la première fois qu'une des Eglises chrétiennes présentes en Terre Sainte signe un tel accord avec l'Etat juif. Désormais, les différents diocèses, monastères, congrégations, instituts religieux ou charitables catholiques disposeront d'une personnalité juridique qui leur permettra d'être légalement propriétaires et d'agir en justice. Le Vatican a pris soin de souligner que l'accord n'affectait pas la question de la souveraineté sur Jérusalem et notamment sur la vieille ville, en secteur oriental occupé et annexé par Israël depuis 1967, où se trouvent les lieux saints (notre photo, l'église du Saint-Sépulcre et la mosquée d'Omar). Le Vatican a réaffirmé son soutien d'une garantie internationale pour ces lieux. Mais d'après Hassan Tahboub, Israël ne manquera pas d'utiliser cet accord pour «préjuger du résultat des négociations sur le statut final», qui doivent déterminer le statut de Jérusalem. Et le ministre des Affaires religieuses d'ajouter : «Nous rejetons catégoriquement cet accord et nous ne sommes absolument pas liés par lui».



Rencontre avec les vendeurs de peu

Cireurs de chaussures, vendeurs de graines ou de cigarettes. Le travail manque en Jordanie mais les petits métiers se portent bien. Combien de personnes en vivent ? Difficile à dire comme il est difficile d'avoir une idée exacte du nombre de chômeurs dans ce pays.

«Gare à la police». Et pourtant elle travaille tous les jours de 7 heures du matin à 8 heures le soir...

Gare à la police

Nombreux sont ceux pour qui, à l'instar d'Im Mustapha, les petits boulots représentent une aide indispensable pour survivre. A quelques mètres de la femme irakienne, un Jordanien d'une quarantaine d'années a installé son petit commerce sur la grand-place en face du théâtre romain. Il prépare du café pour le vendre. «Je gagne de 5 à 8 dinars par jour. Ce n'est pas beaucoup mais c'est mieux que rien». Assez pour vivre dans une petite maison avec seize autres personnes, notamment toute la famille de son frère.

Non loin de là, un gamin de 11 ans débambule dans la fourmilière du hald. Mohammad va à l'école le matin et l'après-midi, il vend des graines de pastèque et des cigarettes. Un sourire lumineux sur le visage, il déclare : «Je travaille et je donne tout ce que je gagne à mes parents». Deux de ses frères travaillent aussi comme lui pour nourrir toute la famille. Même les juifs du il n'y a pas classe. Mohammad est dans la rue pour vendre : «J'étudie le soir parce que je n'ai pas de



Sur un trottoir de basse-ville, un vendeur de colliers. Il y a mille et une façons de gagner un peu d'argent pour survivre.

temps libre. Je voudrais être médecin quand je serai grand et mon rêve est d'aller en Amérique».

Mohammad a choisi de vendre des cigarettes et des graines de pastèque pour survivre. Mais il y a mille autres façons de se débrouiller : ramasser les canettes vides et les refourguier

aux entreprises de recyclage, cirer les chaussures, laver les vitres des voitures, vendre des fleurs ou des billets de loterie... Tout ceci bien entendu est illégal. Tous ceux qui travaillent au noir risquent à tout moment d'avoir des problèmes avec la police et de se faire confisquer la marchandise. C'est ce qui est arrivé à notre

marchand de café, qui n'a jamais obtenu d'autorisation du ministère du travail. Il a donc été obligé de payer 5 JD au poste de police pour récupérer ses paquets de café qui, depuis un an, sont devenus comme sa seule ressource de vivre.

Amirah Ishtay

Nouvelles du Pays

Politique

«Les femmes ont leur part de responsabilité»

Pas de femmes dans la nouvelle Chambre des députés. Passé le premier moment de stupeur, Salwa Nasser, directrice du comité des candidates aux élections législatives, revient sur l'échec cuisant des 17 malheureuses. Selon elle, les systèmes électoral et tribal ne sont pas seuls à mettre en cause.



Le jour des élections, dans le camp palestinien de Baqa'a, aux portes d'un bureau de vote, des femmes appellent à voter pour... un homme.

Le Jourdain : Malgré de longues et médiatiques préparations électorales, aucune des 17 candidates n'est entrée dans la nouvelle Chambre des députés. Quelle impression vous laisse cet échec ? Salwa Nasser : Ces résultats imprévus nous ont surpris. Heureusement les candidates ne sont pas démotivées et disent que c'était une expérience riche. La majorité d'entre elles se présentent pour la première fois à des élections : elles ont appris à organiser une campagne électorale. Une des can-

didates à Kérak a ainsi obtenu l'appui de sa tribu. Même si celle-ci est réduite, elle espère garder son soutien lors du prochain scrutin. Une autre a fait la connaissance de nouvelles personnes qui l'ont soutenu et qui la soutiendront peut-être encore.

Le Jourdain : Au-delà d'une simple désignation, certaines, comme Tonjan Faisal, se sont tout de même indignées et ont accusé le gouvernement d'avoir faussé les élections pour exclure les femmes de la scène politique. Qu'en pensez-vous ? S. N. : Si c'est vrai, je me demande alors pourquoi on donne à la femme le droit de vote et

l'analyse de Tonjan Faisal ? S. N. : Je dirais, à chacun son point de vue. A mon avis le gouvernement n'a rien à voir avec les résultats pour deux raisons : premièrement le gouvernement n'a pas empêché les femmes de participer à la vie politique, d'entrer dans les conseils municipaux, dans les ministères ou au Sénat.

Le Jourdain : Quels sont ces obstacles ? S. N. : Le système de la «voix

unique» n'était pas en faveur des candidates qui se voulaient indépendantes, qu'indubitablement la tribu a été un atout majeur pendant ces élections. Les candidates ont aussi leur part de responsabilité. Par exemple, dans la cinquième circonscription d'Amman, deux femmes, Leila Faisal et Hiam Kalimat, se battaient pour le

même et seul siège circonscription. Or les votes se sont répartis à parts égales entre elles, permettant au troisième candidat, un homme, de l'emporter facilement.

Le Jourdain : Ne pensez-vous que cette défaite des femmes représente un recul de la démocratie en Jordanie ? S. N. : Nous sommes en démocratie depuis 1989. Et ce n'est pas parce que nous avons échoué qu'il faut en vouloir à la démocratie. Nous devons plutôt blâmer ceux qui ne sont pas allés voter ou les candidates qui se battaient pour un même siège. Je crois que la démocratie en Jordanie sera de plus en plus forte dans les années à venir. Ne pas avoir de femmes à la Chambre des députés n'est pas la fin du monde. Nous devons essayer à nouveau, pas seulement pour le Parlement mais dans tous les domaines où des décisions sont à prendre.

Propos recueillis par Nahed Al-Khlout

Les Françaises à l'avant-garde de la politique



Après 62 députées

Après 62 députées, les Françaises ont une nouvelle fois marqué leur présence en politique. Elles ont obtenu 12,5 % des sièges à l'Assemblée nationale, soit une nette amélioration par rapport aux élections de 1993. Cette victoire est le fruit d'une stratégie concertée et d'un engagement sans faille.

Dans les années 1980, les Françaises ont commencé à marquer leur présence en politique. Elles ont obtenu 12,5 % des sièges à l'Assemblée nationale, soit une nette amélioration par rapport aux élections de 1993. Cette victoire est le fruit d'une stratégie concertée et d'un engagement sans faille.

Le Jourdain : Pourquoi votre comité n'est-il pas intervenu pour éviter les candidatures inutiles ? S. N. : Il est impossible de priver la femme jordanienne du droit d'éligibilité, qui est un droit constitutionnel. Nous avons essayé de faire entendre raison aux femmes qui se présentaient pour un même siège afin que l'une d'entre elles se retire en faveur de la mieux placée. Mais toutes les candidates se sont obstinées estimant qu'elles avaient les mêmes chances de gagner que les autres.

Le Jourdain : Est-ce que le vote des femmes a aussi joué un rôle dans cet échec ? S. N. : Nous avons été très déçus car de nombreuses électrices, mais aussi des électeurs, qui avaient promis de voter pour des femmes, ne l'ont pas fait, surtout à Amman où le taux de participation des femmes a été très faible. Dans les autres régions où le système tribal est très fort, la femme est très attachée à sa famille, sa tribu ou son mari. Elle va donc élire la personne que sa famille ou sa tribu aura choisie.

C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré à l'acteur Gérard Depardieu. La lune dans le caniveau, de Jean-Jacques Bénéix (1983). Dans un port, un homme revient tous les soirs au fond d'une impasse, du quartier des docks. C'est là qu'il a découvert le corps de sa sœur assassinée après

avoir été violée. Lundi 17 novembre à 20h30 au Centre culturel Français. Renseignements au 637009/636445.

Exposition

Découvrez la Bretagne avec les toiles de Patrice Cudennec jusqu'au 26 novembre au CCF.

Le Jourdain
645 380

Le Jourdain : Vous n'êtes donc pas d'accord avec

كنا من اجل

Watered down 'Bean'

By Desson Howe

HIS NAME is Bean, and he's already a legume in his own lifetime. A bulgy-eyed, laconic character in high-watermark trousers, goofy brogues and a shirt and tie, who walks from calamity to calamity, he's the highly popular star of a British television comedy series that aired in England during the 1990s.

His movie debut, "Bean," has shot up like a beanstalk worldwide, with a box-office gross of \$120 million. He also has a strong following in America, as avid viewers of his public-TV-aired shows will attest.

Whether this movie connects with a wider, American audience remains to be seen. Bean, played by British actor-comedian Rowan Atkinson (who was the jittery priest in "Four Weddings and a Funeral") is weirder than cute—a possible setback for anyone trying to attract American moviegoers. On the TV show, at least, he has a mean, self-serving streak.

Obviously worried about this, scriptwriters Richard Curtis (who co-created Bean) and Robin Swicord have smoothed over Bean's less-than-savory qualities.

The movie, which doesn't have the tightness and character-conscious quality of the episodes, is a transparent attempt to sell Bean to kids all over the world—American ones in particular. As for the plot, which essentially strings a bunch of Beanisms together as our Bean reacts to Los Angeles life, it's hardly great art. But even through this PG-13 filter, any Bean is good Bean. When the man gets going, he's screamingly funny.

Bean is the worst employee at the National Art Gallery in London. Paid to do little more than watch paintings, he dozes at the job, head hunched so far forward it touches the floor. Determined to dump this loser, the gallery board sends him to accompany Whistler's great painting, "Whistler's Mother," to the Grieron Gallery in Los Angeles, which has just bought the masterpiece for \$50 million. Bean, they tell the Grieron curators and trustees, is an art expert who will enlighten them at the unveiling cere-

mony with insightful remarks about the Whistler.

Bean, of course, hasn't the slightest idea about art. He's completely bewildered by the circle of curators, trustees and patrons eager to hear his pearls of wisdom. Invited to stay a few months at the home of curator David Langley (Peter MacNicol), his wife Alison (Pamela Reed) and their two children, he does his best to seem authoritative.

But he's a man of almost no words, bizarre behavior, oblivious selfishness and incurable destructiveness. It isn't long before Langley's wife packs her bags and the kids, rather than deal with this guy, David, whose job is on the line, is forced to hang in there until the bitter end.

It is Bean's attempts to correct his blunders that are to be savored. Moments before his meeting with the Grieron trustees, for instance, Bean accidentally splashes his pants in the bathroom.

Terrified about the embarrassing wet spot, Bean frantically climbs a trash can so he can dry his crotch against the automatic dryer. Unfortunately, one of the trustees enters the bathroom and sees Bean humping and thrusting inexplicably against the wall.

Then there's the time Bean is trying to stuff a turkey for a hastily prepared dinner at David's house. After completing the business, he realizes he has lost his wristwatch somewhere in there. So he digs desperately into the stuffing. Getting increasingly desperate, he pokes his head into the bird's cavity, only to find he can't get the thing off his head. He staggers into the dining room where his unsuspecting guests are about to get the turkey-headed shock of their lives.

The movie feels stretched out and thin. But for older kids, their parental handlers (who are amazed and grateful for anything even remotely amusing) and appreciators of weird comedy, there are worse things you could do than watch "Bean" (PG-13, 87 minutes) contains mild instances of lewd suggestiveness, ineptness (an exploded vomit bag) and slapstick injuries. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Services



Atkinson

Journalism credibility gets big workout in 'Mad City'

By Kenneth Turan

HOLLYWOOD—Like the reporters whose exploits it details, a film about journalism has to maintain credibility or it has nothing at all. Director Costa-Gavras and stars Dustin Hoffman and John Travolta give "Mad City" a base of believability but it's not fated to last.

Costa-Gavras directed and co-wrote the electric "Z," but that was back in 1970. Here, working from a script by Tom Matthews, he's made a film that has more in common with Billy Wilder's celebrated 1951 "Ace in the Hole," starring Kirk Douglas as a journalist who wouldn't hesitate to auction off his mother if it helped him get a story.

But what seemed prescient nearly half a century ago now comes off as predictable, simplistic and tame. "Mad City" is an example of how enervated polemical filmmaking can become when its plot loses contact with plausibility. While a case could be made for each of the elements of this worst-case scenario happening, putting them all into the same story is a flagrant case of piling on.

"Mad City" opens with what looks like a carefully planned robbery of a savings institution in fictional Madeline, California but it's only a local news team from KXBD Channel 6 trying to get a hit-and-run interview from a recalcitrant bank official.

Leading that attack is the ever-harsh Max Brackett (Hoffman). Once a nationally known network reporter based in Manhattan, Brackett has been exiled to Madeline for offenses not immediately revealed, and he's desperate enough to try anything to get back.

Attempting to control Brackett is weary editor Lou Potts (Robert Prosky). While the reporter wants to move the line that defines acceptable jour-



Travolta

nalistic behavior, the editor worries about what the community will think. And when Brackett gets too pushy, Potts sends him and devy-eyed intern Laurie (Mia Kirschner) to do a puff piece on hudget cuts at the local Museum of Natural History.

Simultaneously headed for the museum is recently laid off \$8-an-hour security guard Sam Bailey (Travolta). All he wants is the chance to plead with Mrs. Banks (Blythe Danner), the museum's patrician director, for his old job. But when she tries to throw him out Bailey takes an automatic weapon from his bag, waves it around, shoots someone and ends up, much to his chagrin, as a takeover artist with a bunch of schoolchildren as hostages.

A lost soul who couldn't be more hapless as a criminal mastermind, Sam is way out of his depth from minute one of

these misadventures. All he wants is the status quo, and when he sees himself castigated on TV for his part in the shooting, he angrily scolds the talking head. "It was an accident, moron."

The reason Sam Bailey is on TV at all is that Max Brackett just happened to be occupied in the men's room when the weapon went off. After alerting his station, Brackett proceeds to mentor Bailey in the finer points of hostage-taking, advising him whom to talk to, what to say to them, what to ask for and how to get it. As to what the reporter wants, that's clear to us if not to Bailey: a story hot enough to get him back to New York.

Under Brackett's expert manipulation, the saga of Sam Bailey gets increasingly bigger until it turns into just the kind of hogus human drama that catches the attention of the net-



Hoffman

work boys in New York. Much against his will, it even piques the interest of Brackett's nemesis, anchor Kevin Hollander (Alan Alda), "the man America trusts for news" and the reason Brackett is in exile in the first place.

Though its basic situation is hardly new, "Mad City" does have something going for it. While Travolta looks as uncomfortable in his part as his character does brandishing an automatic weapon, Hoffman, who was originally thought of for the Bailey role, does excellent work as the newsman, giving a sharp, focused and intelligent performance that adds a note of complexity to a film that generally does without it.

The problem with "Mad City" is that in its eagerness to make its point about journalistic excess as strong as possible, the film just about huries it. Everyone from the FBI to mili-

tant militias shows up and everything that can possibly go wrong with the coverage does, from bogus accusations of prejudice to complete strangers being interviewed as Bailey's friends.

Reporters sneak into hospital rooms, trample on flower gardens, and even innocent young intern Laurie gets turned into a conniving careerist in the blink of an eye. Everyone hustles, manipulates and looks for the exploitable angle, which makes them not all that much different from the people responsible for this trying film.

(MPAA rating: PG-13, for depiction of a hostage situation, including violence and brief language. Los Angeles Times guidelines: The violence is brief and not exploited.) ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Services

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COMEDY SPORTS News

Audi A6

Its beauty glows from within

By Paul Dean

WE SPEND 99.97001 percent of our motoring hours peering from trashing up and hanging out in the insides of automobiles. And when was the last time we desired someone at first sight because of all the good and gentle stuff we saw on the inside?

Even thoughtful car builders are guilty of inside-out priorities, devoting most of their new model energies to radical cab-forward designs, dashing lineal sculptures and brighter twinkles from larger headlights set in revised grilles. Interiors usually get a new gearshift knob and a fabric change.

But at Audi—a company bulling its way back into the world market and throwing some serious blocks at BMW and Mercedes-Benz—there's as much concern for within as without. With the audacious Audi A6 for 1998 comes a choice of interiors the German manufacturer describes as "atmospheric...interior environments to match a buyer's individual style."

The moods are "Ambition...Ambiance...Advance," a terrible trio of geeky words presuming more spiritual times. Or access codes to high-time channeling. Still, it's an ingenious concept. To better visualize "Ambition," think symbols of riches. A boardroom. The paneled lounge of a London club. Because this interior can come in exploded leathers and fabrics, Walnut trim is the color of old cognac and brushed aluminum the gray of a fine power tankard.

Even the interior stitching is vertical and in narrow ribs to suggest the pinstripes of executive ambition. But we might have called it Nasdaq.

"Ambiance" is Italian for our milieu and, in this case, the ambient colors and vitality of the Italian Riviera. Leather and leatherette upholstery are available in vanilla or taupe, con-



trasted by royal blue exterior paint. By no accident, those are colors of big yachts and their canvas awnings. Wood trim is light and amber, suggesting alfresco strolls, with aluminum brushed to the pearl-gray ambience of dusk in Tuscany. Yet we might have called it: pasta.

"Advance" implies a peek into the next millennium by any means of your choice. Shamanism. Crystals. Sensory deprivation creating astral travel, with friends flying free. So these interior colors—the leathers, fabrics and woods—are heavy with terra cotta and earth tones. Textures are roughened slightly and hint at adobe. Think of the New Mexico desert as your advance to the future. Although we would have gone out on a mesa and called it saguaro.

No matter your choice of interior, it costs no extra. But enough of this. As millennium-motivated as the insides are, consider them a perfect match for the A6's equally innovative exteriors—exterior well worth examining on a daily basis.

Audi has gone wonderfully overboard on styling, borrowing heavily from the round-

shouldered bubble shape of the Audi TT sports car that culled a million approving nods at last year's global auto shows. Hence a silhouette that's a perfect parabola, with a shortened snout set lower than a snubbed tail that's almost a fastback.

Market aim of the A6 is as obvious as the four rings on its front: BMW's 528i and Mercedes-Benz's E320. But the A6 is priced so wisely, equipped so well, and will command so much admiration for thorough engineering and preoccupation with safety, that you can expect it also to start filching customers from Lexus, Acura and Infiniti.

At a base of \$33,750 (in the U.S.), it is \$6,000 less than the Bimmer and \$11,000 less than the Mercedes and not that much more than the beginner cars of Lexus, Cadillac, Infiniti, BMW's 3-Series or Mercedes-Benz's C-Class.

It is 4 inches longer than the BMW 528i, 3 inches longer than a Mercedes E320, and that translates to about the same interior room but with more trunk space than either.

Although a genuine five-passenger car with four doors,

the A6 has the tidier, more compact look of a coupe.

At 200 horsepower, its 2.8-liter, five-valve V-6 (the 150-horsepower, 1.8-liter, five-valve V-4 Turbo is available in Jordan) puts out more power than the BMW, although not the Mercedes. On the other hand, the Teutonic competition cannot offer Audi's optional Quattro all-wheel drive constantly shifting 65 percent of available torque to the wheel with the most grip and an automatic with sequential, Tiptronic shifting.

The A6 has an endless list of standard equipment typically optional on other mid-size luxury cars. Dual zone climate control. Twelve-way power seats. Headlight washers. Rear fog light. Puddle lights in doors to prevent you from stepping into—what else?—puddles. Rear reading lamps. Lights for glove box, trunk, lighter, ashtray and front and rear footwells. Phew.

Plus: Grati handles over all doors. Eight-speaker sound system. Wood inlays. Embroidered floor mats. Tie-down eyelets in the trunk. Retained accessory

power that allows operation of windows and sunroof that you forget to close before switching off. Lordy.

And now, crank in Audi's impeccable three-year warranty, which includes free maintenance. Although the high cost of replacing wiper blades and putting air in the tires is still your problem.

All these systems and stuff, unfortunately, weigh a ton. Literally. And a Quattro-equipped A6 is heavier than the opposition—in fact, more than 200 pounds heavier than the BMW 528i—and it shows in the performance.

Initial acceleration is capable, but 9.5 seconds is no bargain when running from rest to 60 mph. That's slower than anything in its class. And the A6 sustains that dignified passage when climbing to higher speeds. Despite a chassis-flattening, multi-link suspension and liberal use of aluminum for additional stiffness and strength, the A6 shows a little more flop and body roll than we like.

Oh, handling is all very predictable, and the car makes no sudden moves that might alarm the timid. Enthusiasts will find they're not quite so able in the corners as they thought, and certainly not as capable as they would be in a BMW 528i.

The rationale for all this, of course, is that the A6 is a full-blown luxury car, not a quasi-sports sedan. Its charm is with superb, unique looks in a largely faceless automotive society: total affordability for those within its buyer envelope, and a quality of construction, fittings, comfort and conveniences that certainly are mainstream ultimates. This is a car that has, in a word, panache. What a great name for an interior.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Egypt's battle of the brew tells all

By Samir Raafat

Star Cairo Correspondent

AGAINST THE backdrop of to Doha or not to Doha ha-ha, an annual dilemma on whether or not to attend the Middle East & North Africa Economic Conference, a theme with which the general public has begun to tire of and baffle with jokes, Cairo, at least the privileged ones, have other things on their minds.

For instance, which of the LE 1,000 per plate charity benefit to attend? The Laura Bagioti fashion gala whose proceeds will go to the Red Crescent or the Christian Dior event which is sponsoring another do-gooder.

The cellular-toting husbands meanwhile, who only 15 years ago were investing in or aspiring to a sinecure with this that or the other non-interesting bearing Islamic bank, foundation or organization, are now playing the Cairo Bourse for all its worth.

Also in the news are such things as golf and business clubs where annual memberships run from LE 4000 to double that amount.

Stealing the headlines last week was the opening of the new assembly plant for the LE 300,000 Mercedes car, a sum which represents 400 times Egypt's average per capita income. Mercedes follows in the tracks of BMW, the 100,000-Plus Opel, the more affordable Peugeot as well as several middle class Asian jobs all of which have opened assembly plants in either one of Egypt's expanding industrial parks.

Hardly anyone mentions the dreary no-thrills Nasr-Fiat car synonymous to Nasser's socialism. Like his almost defunct so-called people's car, Nasser's failed economic legacy is littered with corpses of best forgotten products.

An exceptional indicator of changing times is the merging Battles of the Brews, an interesting and amusing analysis, if there was any, on how Egypt in one decade is shifting from imported conservatism, a phenomenon which threatened to atomize Egypt's core legal system and civil way of life, to a new era of consumer liberalism the results of which are still to be fathomed.

At the height of its suffocating affair with conservatism and reactionary politics, Egypt's only brewery, known locally as "beera Stella", had all but disappeared from non-touristic public places and sometimes from entire governments as well. The Stella depots were the occasional targets of fundamentalist-inspired

incendiary attacks so that even the sellers of the malt would hide it, especially during the month of Ramadan. Advertising the brew had become a taboo.

But now, as Egypt's privatization slowly gravitates towards universality, are starting to change. When Stella's, the Al-Bahar Beverages Company (ABC), was re-launched earlier this year, its share issue was immediately oversubscribed. Even as ABC's resuscitated stock exchange, having partnered with Denmark's Danbrow (Copenhagen), lost no time launching a new product, Stella Premium in an effort to shake the flint out of the malt.

And while the revamped company's newly launched advertising campaign promised to be one of the sexiest in town, certain public places where consumption of alcoholic beverages were heretofore forbidden, such as the well-attended and elitist Gezira Sporting Club, are now re-evaluating their exclusionary policies.

Looking again at Egypt's beer industry, it realizes how state-type monopolies are on the way out. For almost half a century Egypt had only one alcoholic beer to sip, enjoy, savor and joke about.

Today, Stella's historic copyright on the popular malt is about to be given a significant blow. The beer blast is coming from the giant Coca-Cola Group owned by the Sawiris family. Besides being into everything you can think of from real estate developments to Big Macs, computer chips, restaurants and 15-minute fads, the Sawiris are now going for the market suds as they set up a LE 100-million joint venture with Lowenbrau.

While ABC will open in 1999, a new beer manufacturing plant in Al Helwan city, as well as Alexandria, the Sawiris will erect their brewery in the Red Sea area where five-star hotels, motels and holiday villages are mushrooming by the day. Direct flights, bearing booze-thirsty tourists from Europe and the Gulf arrive daily in Sharm Al Sheikh and Hurghada, so that marketing the once semi-forbidden malt will not be a problem claims a bullish investor.

As another mega-investor puts it, "Egypt's new economic era is not for the faint-hearted. Teetotalers best remain at home."

Everything in world soccer ties together

By Alex Johnson

A SHORT illustration of how everything in world soccer ties together, starting Brad Friedel, whose immediate prospects are inextricably tied up with those of two men in Australia.

Friedel is the U.S. national team goalkeeper whose stellar play with Columbus and earlier in Turkey has excited the interest of several English Premier League teams. His newest suitor is Liverpool, saddled with David "Calamity" James, who keeps goal like Jorge Campos, only without the safe, sober judgment.

Liverpool made a seven-figure offer for Friedel, who was recently honored as Major League Soccer's top keeper. But as has frequently happened with U.S. players, Friedel's move is tied up in the English Department of Employment, which has not granted him a permit to work in the country.

Here's why: On paper, Friedel would appear to meet all the requirements for a permit, but the Employment Department is refusing to review borderline applications, including Friedel's, while it awaits a High Court ruling on an appeal of its denial of a permit for Zeljko Kalac, a goalkeeper for the Australian national team whom another club bought last May. It has been waiting since August, which could well be the reason Sunderland's purchase of U.S. star Jovan Kirovski a month later was turned down. Kalac's case is interesting, because it highlights ethical questions surrounding Australia coach Terry Venables. Venables is coaching halfway around the world because various legal difficulties forced him to resign last year as coach of the English national team despite impressive results, including a semifinal appearance in the European Championships.

Once he settled in, Venables decided to try to keep his hand in in English soccer. So he bought control of Portsmouth, in the First Division. Shortly thereafter, Portsmouth started buying up Australian stars, setting off alarms that Venables may have been using his position as national team coach to steer Australian talent to his club team, including Kalac. Venables and Portsmouth both insist that the club's purchase of five members of the Australian national team in the last five months is sheer coincidence.

This is one of the angles that has caught the attention of the English Department of Employment, which has suspicions that Venables is using Portsmouth as a farm team to develop Australian players not otherwise of English League caliber. There is some cause for suspicion. The Employment Department once before did admit Kalac. He justified his admission by conceding five goals in only two appearances for Leicester City, demonstrating a bewildering inability to handle crosses or to hold on to high balls bewildering because he is 6 feet 7 inches tall.

Nor are Employment Department officials the only folks who smell a rat. Two other well-known Australian goalkeepers play in England, Mark Bosnich of Aston Villa and Mark Schwarzer of Middlesbrough, both with better pedigrees and far more accomplished resumes, especially Bosnich, a mainstay in the Australian goal. Yet it is Kalac who has started a large percentage of Australia's recent games.

Schwarzer directly accuses Venables of playing both ends against the middle, charging that Kalac is being forced into the national team ahead of better keepers expressly to get enough international appearances to qualify for a work permit so he can join Portsmouth.

"There's a pact there, and they're push-

ing Zeljko to be in the team to get him qualified," Schwarzer said last week.

It might be easy to dismiss Schwarzer's complaints as sour grapes, were it not for the earnest concurrence of Australia's greatest soccer hero, Frank Farina, now coach of Australian league champions Brisbane Strikers. Farina, who won 77 Australian caps while playing at the top levels of Italian and Belgian soccer, is equally blunt in his condemnation of Venables' tactics.

This is especially significant because Farina was an enthusiastic supporter of Venables' appointment as national coach. Indeed, Farina said Monday that "Terry Venables is the man, and I think he's the best thing to happen in 25 years to Australian soccer," but he nonetheless slammed Venables' conduct.

"I certainly think there is a conflict of interest there, as does, I think, everyone else in Australia... Soccer Australia most probably knows as well as everyone else that it doesn't just look like it—it is a conflict of interest."

Lending credence to the allegations is that later this month, when Australia faces a two-leg playoff in World Cup qualifying, Bosnich will be back in goal. As long as it can't hurt the World Cup effort, it seems, Kalac gets the nod and thereby the caps that could get him a work permit. Once the games mean something, however, Venables reveals his real opinion and benches Kalac.

It's that sort of ethically squishy behavior that has kept Venables in hot water for most of his managerial career. Venables said Sunday that, for unrelated business reasons, he's thinking of dumping his Portsmouth job. That might be the best thing all around. Usually, only he and his teams suffer. This time, Brad Friedel and Liverpool are among the innocent victims.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Cleaning up the act

Michael Thompson-Noel

I EXPECT you missed the recent news of the death of a young Japanese boxer. He boxed under the name Akira Taiga. His real name was Akira Sato. He had suffered brain damage and fallen into a week-long coma after being knocked out in a fight in Tokyo for a vacant national title.

According to an AP wire-story from Tokyo: "The 23-year-old Taiga was the 27th Japanese professional boxer to die from wounds inflicted in the ring since the Japan Boxing Commissioner's office was set up in 1952."

In the seventh round of the 10-round bout, Yoshiaki Matsukura attacked Taiga with a flurry of blows and sent him to the canvas.

"When the dazed Taiga stood up, Matsukura landed a left square against Taiga's head, knocking him out. Taiga became a professional boxer in 1993 and had a record of 13 victories, including five knockouts, against two defeats and two draws."

Another news agency, Kyodo, reported that Taiga was the sixth boxer to be killed in Japan since September 1995, and that his death had "occurred at a time when Japanese officials are stepping up efforts to protect boxers that include...computerized brain check-ups."

Unless you live in Japan, it is unlikely you saw those reports, mainly because they were swamped by everything else going on in the wide and sometimes weird world of sport.

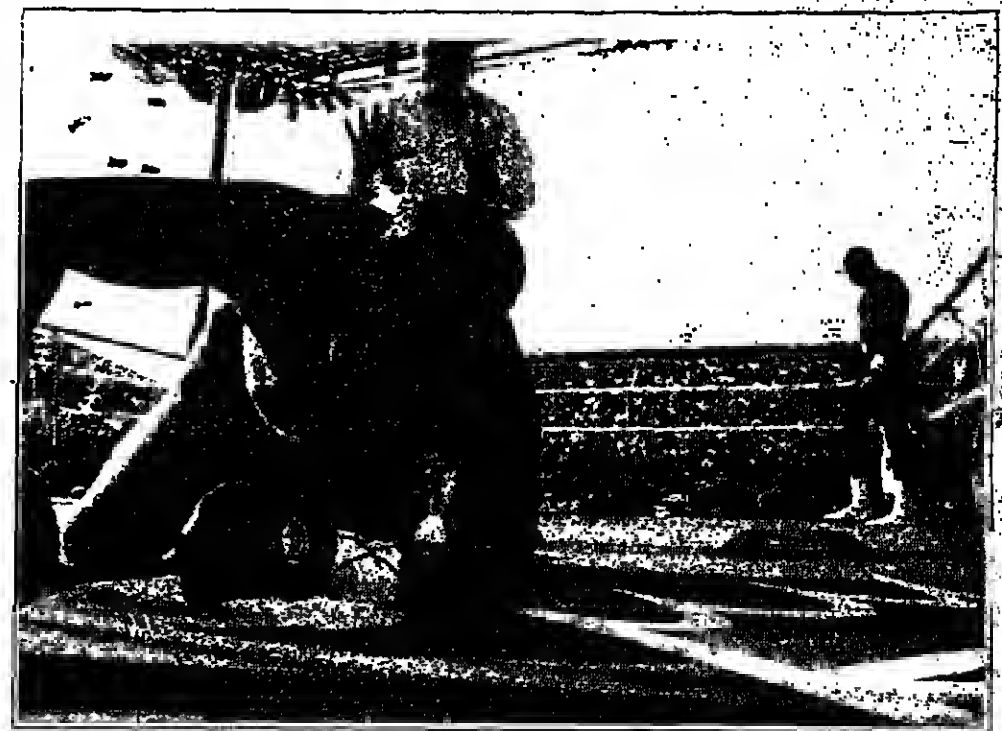
If you had read those stories from Tokyo, you might have assumed that the young boxer's death was another nail in the coffin of a sport notorious for corruption, criminality, baseness and plain ugliness.

But you would have been wrong. The odds against professional boxing being banned which is what many critics want are extremely small, for that would drive it underground. Like it or not, boxing will be around for many more years, so long as the corrosive greed of the agents, promoters and broadcast media who strive to bleed it dry does not make it more of a laughing stock than it is.

I like boxing. I hate violence, but I like boxing.

Perhaps I am a weakling, a coward and a degenerate, the sort of guy who, back in the Pleistocene, was always a spectator, content to watch from a distance while his fellow hunter-gatherers stalked and butchered the prey, or stalked and butchered other hunter-gatherers.

Or perhaps I am just con-



fused. Perhaps I have a twisted understanding of what "violence" really means. Dictionary-wise, violence means "exercise of physical force so as to injure or abuse," which sounds exactly like boxing. It is a definition which perfectly describes the crunching blows, repulsive cuts, swollen eyes, infliction of incapacitating pain and occasionally the knockouts I have witnessed at professional fights.

Boxing is always violent. Yet I have never quite seen it as skin to true violence, in the sense of there being a culpable aggressor and a non-culpable victim.

Boxers would prefer to do almost anything but box, yet they do it voluntarily they do it for the money. They know they will be hurt. They know they may be killed. Boxing writer Jonathan Reddall once made the mistake of idly telling a boxer named Valentine Golding that if he did not enjoy boxing, he shouldn't be a boxer. Golding was appalled. "We don't do it for enjoyment, Jon!" the shocked boxer said.

"For money. For money, Jon. You think we'd do it for enjoyment?"

As for those who watch and like boxing, there is no mystery there, either. In 1986, when he was only 19, Mike Tyson defined boxing's attraction in these words: "People want entertainment, intrigue. I give them what they want."

(For some, the entertainment sector that Tyson conjured up was the circus. "I think Mike Tyson belongs in a cage," fellow heavyweight George Foreman said when Tyson was accused of raping

Desiree Washington. "I think he needs to be sheltered like you should shelter a lion or a tiger. You lock him up, except when you want him to come out and jump through a few hoops. When that is over, you lock him up again.")

Until recently, Britain probably had more registered professional boxers than the rest of Europe east and west combined, according to John Morris, secretary of the British Boxing Board of Control. That has changed, now that increasing numbers of fighters in Russia and eastern Europe have turned professional. But Britain still has approximately 1,100 registered professional boxers, of whom about 620 are regarded as active.

"Boxing must never stand still or convince itself it has made itself as safe as it can be," says Morris, adding that the BBBB is pleased with the progress of its scheme whereby many boxers are required to undergo an annual MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) brain-scan, in addition to an initial MRI (magnetic resonance angiogram) test.

However, Morris admits that MRI scans are aimed at eliminating prevalence of the punch-drunk syndrome among weakened boxers at high risk of brain injury, and cannot pinpoint vulnerability to sudden, massive perhaps death-dealing brain damage to boxers not already predisposed to such injury.

The damage inflicted by a blow is determined by the energy of the punch, the resistance to the G-forces exerted on the head by the neck muscles and the ability of the assailed (boxer) to block or avoid contact. Effective meas-

ures will therefore address boxer fatigue and methods of diffusing the punch. The number of rounds, the length of rounds, the interval between rounds and the interval between the weigh-in and the fight [because of possible dehydration] need to be changed. Glove design must be improved and a study of the use of headgear is required to resolve whether [headguards] protect the head or merely increase the size of the target.

There are sports more dangerous than boxing. Inquiries are underway, for example, to determine why there have been 17 deaths in 15 years at one of Britain's three national scuba diving centres. The most recent fatality at the centre was the fourth involving an inexperienced diver in six months.

Boxing could do much to clean up its act. Slowly, it will contrive to make itself a little less vicious. And it will want to ensure that, whenever a boxer is "bludgeoned into unconsciousness, he or, come to that, she, receives instant, high-grade medical attention before being transferred to the nearest specialist neurosurgical unit within an hour of the brain starting to bleed. At present, this sometimes doesn't happen.

There is more ugliness than nobility in boxing. Yet people like me still think it does good. If I hadn't watched a lot of professional boxing, and met numerous boxers, I would not be such a pacifist, practically a nanny-pammy. Take my word for it: nanny-pambies do not start wars.

Financial Times-Sydney

Skydives over Amman

BRITISH ROYAL Marine on desert and mountain training in Jordan have made full use of the excellent facilities at the Royal Jordanian Parachute Club.

The Marines completed 4 and 6 man formation skydives over Amman, enjoying the beautiful scenery and outstanding parachuting weather.

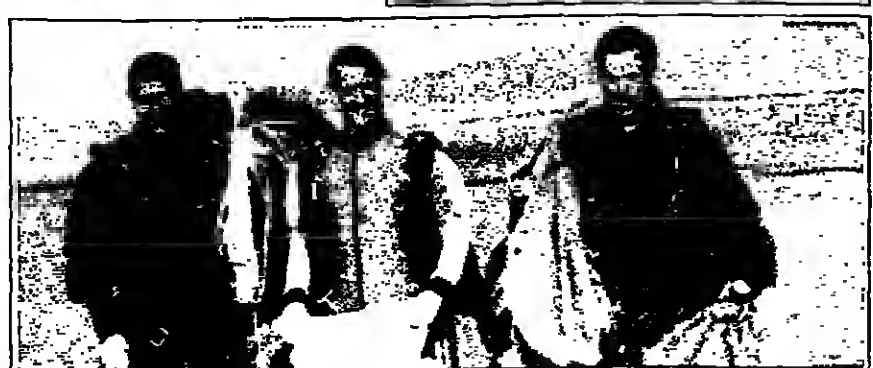
Exercise Desert Song, involving over 800 members of the armed forces, has allowed troops the chance to see Jordan. Lieutenant Tony de Reya learnt there was a parachuting center and literally jumped at the chance to skydive.

"Jumping in a foreign country is always exciting, the facilities at the newly opened club have been ideal," said Tony. "Samih Janakat, director of the RJPC, has been exceptionally helpful and without him this would not have been possible."

The grateful Royal Marines presented a plaque to the club as a

momento of their visit. "It is my first visit to Amman" added Corporal Juis Walker, and hopefully not my last.

Left: Captain of the Royal Jordanian Parachute Club receiving an award from a member of the British Royal Marines
Down: The British Royal Marine team



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